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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX

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GAME
ART**

Inject new ideas into
your character art –
pro artists reveal all!

PHOTOSHOP

**CONCEPT ART
MASTERCLASS**

Inside

**GO MULLETS! PAINT
RETRO GAME ART**

**HOW TO CRAFT AN
ELITE SPACESHIP**

**MEET THE ARTISTS:
CARBINE STUDIOS**

Future

Feature

ART OF DESTINY

BOSS LEVEL! HOW PRO ARTISTS GOT THEIR BIG BREAK IN THE GAMES INDUSTRY

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Welcome... to the big one!



Hello scribblers! We always have enormous fun putting together our video game art issue, and this month's games edition seems even more special because of the exclusive bespoke art on the cover. Motiga's Vinod Rams and Devon Cady-Lee have joined forces to paint the larger-than-life characters from the studio's new

video game Gigantic. Thanks guys! I'm very pleased with how it turned out. Find out how Vinod follows a specific character creation process when creating art for a game over on page 60.

It's always an honour to showcase the art that will spark the imaginations of millions of people in homes around the world. We're hugely proud to represent the global community of professional and hobbyist artists who want to share their art, learn from each other and keep up with the latest on what artists are creating in their respective industries, be it games, comics, animation and beyond. And while we're talking about art that's inspired millions of people, turn to page 84 to see what we've got in store for you next month. It just gets better and better!

Also, yet again, we're giving you the chance to get a free Apple Newsstand or Google Play Store version of this month's magazine and start enjoying all the interactive features of our digital edition on your iOS or Android device. Turn to page 29 for details.

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

Our special cover for subscribers this issue.



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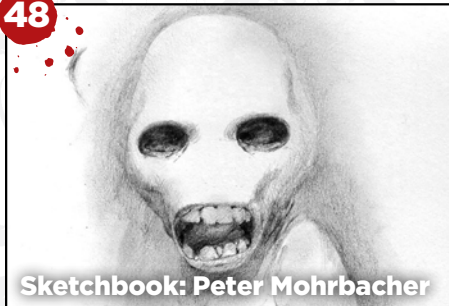
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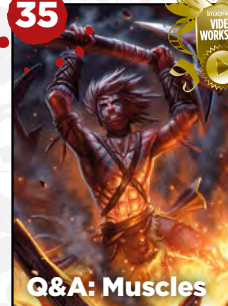
"We looked at a wide range of artists for inspiration, both for subject matter and technique"
Destiny lead concept artist Jesse van Dijk

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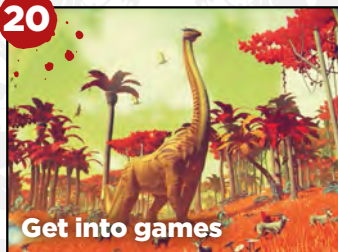
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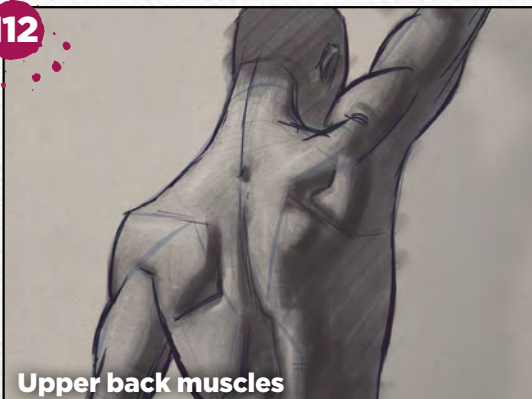
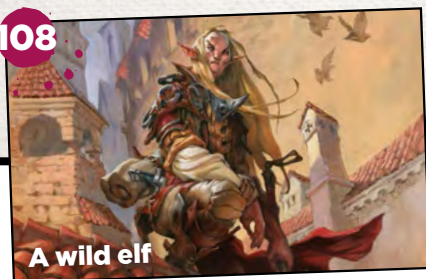
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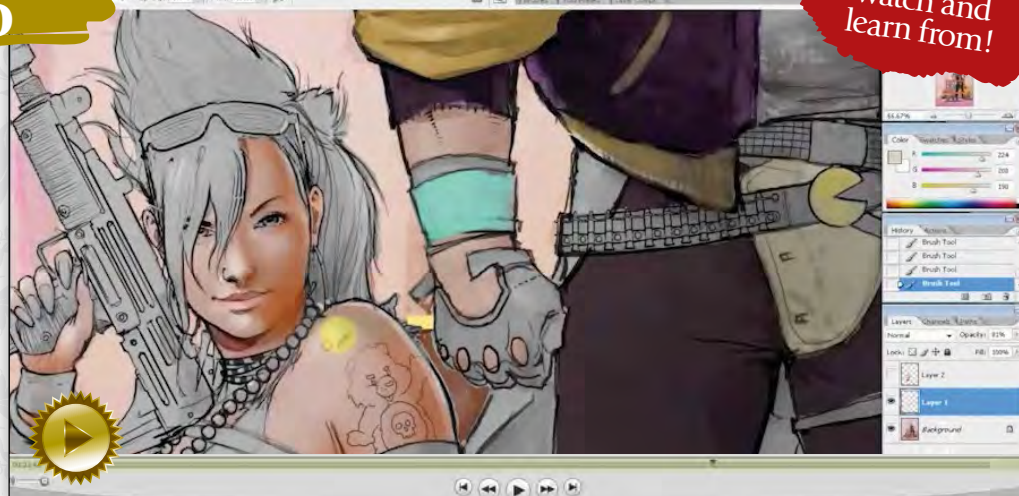
Getting your hands on all of this issue's videos, artwork and brushes is quick and easy. Just visit our dedicated web page at <http://ifxm.ag/big115game>

OVER 5 HOURS
of workshop and Q&A videos to watch and learn from!

WORKSHOP VIDEO

Paint game characters

Games artist Remko Troost passes on his advice for conceiving characters – with a garish retro twist.



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You're three steps away from this issue's resource files...

- 1 Go to the website**
Type this into your browser's address bar (not the search bar): <http://ifxm.ag/big115game>
- 2 Find the files you want**
Search through the list of resources to watch or download.
- 3 Download what you need**
You can download all of the files at once, or individually.

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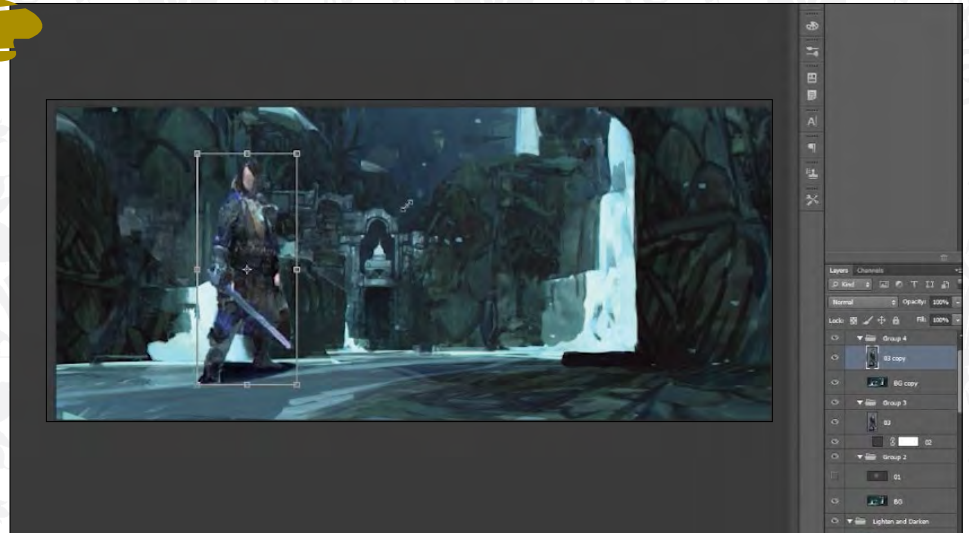
Watch our videos to gain a unique insight into how our artists create their stunning art

WORKSHOP VIDEOS



Thomas Scholes

How to make your workflow more efficient and boost your creativity. Plus WIPs and final image



Josh Attack

Learn to concept a spaceship as part of the video game pipeline process. Plus WIPs, final image and brushes



TRAINING

James Gurney

The illustrator gives you the confidence to paint when you're on location, in an excerpt from his new instructional video.



Q&A VIDEOS

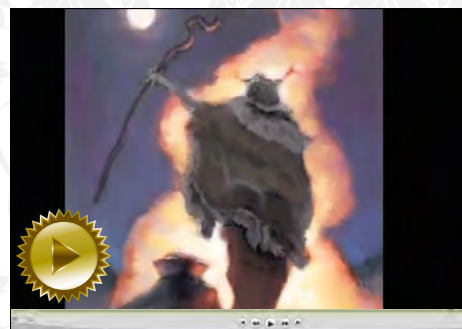
Sara Forlenza

Learn how to use bright colours to depict a character caught in a rain storm. Plus WIPs and final image



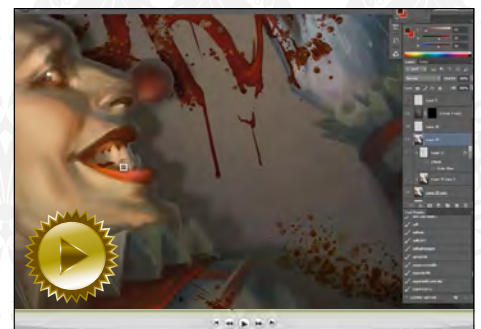
John Petersen

Paint detailed octopus tentacles by understanding different surfaces and light. Plus WIPs and final image



Dave Braggalla

Get excited about the possibilities of colour to create a campfire scene at night. Plus WIPs and final image



Damian Schouweiler

Understand translucency, hue and texture to paint convincing blood-spattered walls. Plus WIPs and final image

PLUS Watch Sara Forlenza's video showing the best way to depict muscles illuminated by firelight and Damian Schouweiler's video on painting a reflection in a mirror, plus WIPs and finished art from artists including Vinod Rams, Mark Molnar and Naiha Raza.

9 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

SCRATCHED PAINT

Josh Attack uses this brush for scratched paint on spaceships.

WATERCOLOUR EFFECT

Remko Troost has created this for a watercolour effect in his retro art.

MINIMALIST METHOD

Aaron Limonick likes to keep his custom brushes as simple as possible.



Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR FANTASY ART

ImagineFX
ARTIST
MONTH

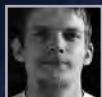
Kuldar Leement

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MEDIA: Photoshop, Mandelbulb 3D, Terragen



In his own words, Kuldar's drawings have always looked "futuristic and weird." The Estonian creative studied

contraction and technical drawing for three years, before enrolling at art school to focus on graphic design. He works as a designer and art director at an ad agency, drawing in his spare time.

"I do digital art just for myself and just for fun," Kuldar says. "Every piece is a challenge for me. Some works are inspired by my daily life; some are just raw doodles that turn into butterflies."

VOID SECTOR "It's obviously a sector to avoid. I wanted to give it this destroyed look with an enormous sense of scale - that's why there are always figures in my paintings. It enables the viewer to put themselves in the character's position and get a real feel for the setting."



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Congratulations Kuldar - you've won yourself a copy of *Exposé II* and *d'artiste: Character Design*! To find out more about these two great books, go to www.ballisticpublishing.com.



ImagineFX December 2014

FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com

Artist crit

Daniel Dociu, video game art director, appreciates Kuldar's skilful use of space



"The image impresses through the vastness of the space. The details in the peripheral areas draw the viewer in. Overall, it's a powerful, memorable piece."

Ken Fee

LOCATION: Scotland

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MEDIA: Photoshop



"There are more than enough excellent artists depicting alpha males staring moodily into the distance," Ken says, "or female characters so inadequately dressed that pneumonia is a far greater risk than any approaching dragon or troll. So I tend to opt for the pursuit of ambient mood or character, figurative or mechanical."

Dundee-based artist Ken has worked on big-name game titles such as Lemmings, Grand Theft Auto and Harry Potter. His work begins as quick sketches - on screen or paper - which he blocks out to rough 3D models, before completely painting base renders in Photoshop. "This hopefully means that any inherent style I may have in painting comes through," he says, "and isn't drowned out by the software processes employed."

1



2



3



1 A GOOD DAY "I prefer doing caricature work and so, inspired by various 1940s aircraft, this image became the first of my recent portfolio pieces. Hopefully, the pose of the pilot and the warm lighting in the scene prove as important to the light-hearted nature of the image as the design of the plane itself."

2 THE STURMRAD "Daytime TV often has little to offer, but on this occasion an advert for a Dyson vacuum cleaner set some ideas going through my head. It was important to me that the design - as with all my concepts - would work (at least in my head). This was the final image."

3 ANGEL "A character test piece, really - inspired by the steampunk movement, but also trying to put a slightly different spin on things. The work I do is usually quite military or functional in nature, so it was fun to go for deliberately vivid colours and a more dynamic, free-flowing costume design."

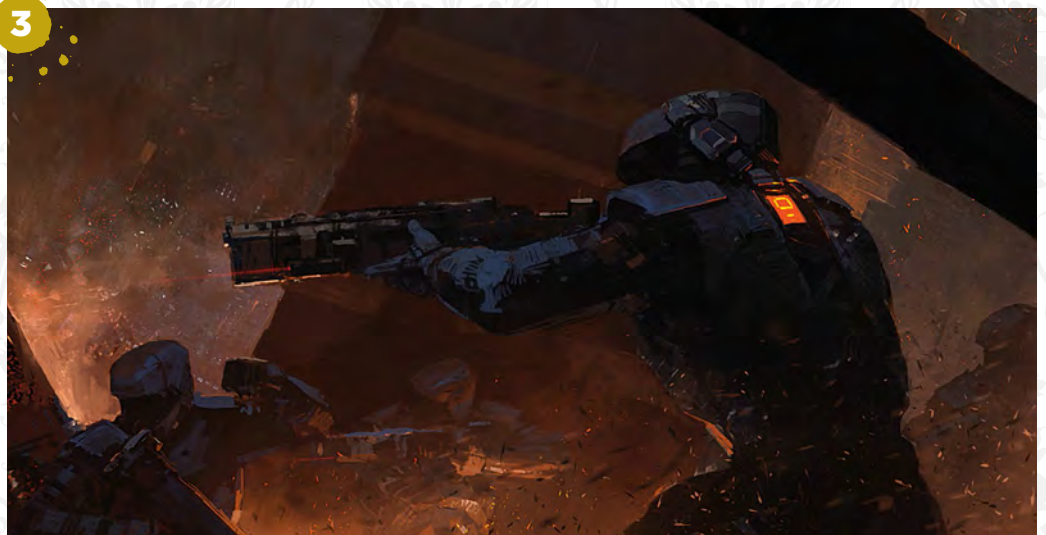


Alexander Mandradjiev
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EMAIL: mandra14@gmail.com
MEDIA: Photoshop



Sony Feature Animation employee Alexander works with writers, directors and producers to create illustrated key frames and storyboards for films. The LA-based artist's credits include *World War Z*, *Wrath of the Titans* and *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*.

From Jean Giraud and Craig Mullins, to Stanley Kubrick and Martin Scorsese – many and varied visual artists influence Alexander's work. But the thread running through his work – the thing that ties all together – is his love of storytelling.



1 HEIST "I like to feature psychological elements in my art, playing with emotional qualities that are relatable to us as people – death versus life or death parallel to birth."

2 TRANSPORT "The feeling of a crowded space, and the character's lack of awareness of what's happening, adds to the claustrophobia and increases the intensity in this scene about assassination."

3 QUIETLY "A ceasefire moment in this battle scene helps describe the vast destruction and desolated battle scene surrounding us as the viewer."

Bram Sels

LOCATION: Belgium

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Bram is a Belgian freelance illustrator and concept artist who counts Ubisoft, Wyrd Miniatures and Wideshot

Entertainment among his clients. His portfolio features everything from book covers and movie-shot explorations, to character designs and environment art.

"Although I mostly works digitally," Bram says, "I've always had a thing for traditional painting and the influence it has on digital artists. Over the past few years, I've honed in on my traditional painting skills and looked for ways to incorporate those techniques and textures into digital paintings."

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Bram is certainly capable of painting detailed, well-lit imagery, but here my attention is drawn to his 50-minute speed paint Abandoned House, which has a dreamy, melancholic air about it. What a way to start the working day!"

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

1 SERVES ME RIGHT "I painted this image for The Art Department. The brief was pretty straightforward: create an environment with a figure that takes up at least one-eighth of the canvas. Well, this is what came out."

2 PIGEON BOMBERS "This started out as a way to practise industrial design. I've always liked gritty, down-to-earth sci-fi, and I think my image shows that. The idea was to create a fictional world in which a biker-themed rebellion group creates smaller bombing units that could terrorise the occupied areas around them."

3 CLAP HANDS, HERE COMES CHARLIE "I've always had a thing for turn-of-the-century, foggy street scenes, and I had been thinking a while about creating one myself. My portfolio lacked architectural scenes so it was the ideal opportunity to paint some buildings. Still, I wanted to keep it just a tiny bit historically off, so I invented a big-ass carriage to be the focal point of the painting."

4 ABANDONED HOUSE "A 50-minute speed painting done for the Super Speedpainting Funtimes group on Facebook. These speed paintings are a good way to get the juices flowing in the early hours of the day. Usually, when I finish a speed painting (and a coffee or ten) I'm hopped up and able to fluently paint for the rest of the day."



2



3



4



Howie Schechtman

LOCATION: US

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MEDIA: Photoshop, 3ds Max



The thing Howie loves most about working on environments is how ambiguous they can be. "It's my hope," the

freelance concept artist and illustrator says, "that viewers of my work come away with their own story, and what affects them the most is the atmosphere and mood."

Howie, who's based in Churchville, Pennsylvania, says his work leans toward the "darker end of the emotional spectrum." He strives for the mix of fear and wonder that characterises the work of Ridley Scott and Stanley Kubrick.

1



1 ALIEN BED "Photography of old, abandoned buildings initially inspired this piece. I love the textures and colouring that abandoned architecture has and it sets the perfect mood to make the viewer feel tense but still curious."

2

2 CLOCK TOWER "I did this piece for a weekly challenge on the ConceptArt.org forums. Adding figures to any environment is tough because they demand a lot of attention, but I was keen for them to feel like a small part of the whole picture. I want the viewer to look all around the image and not just get stuck in one or two quadrants."

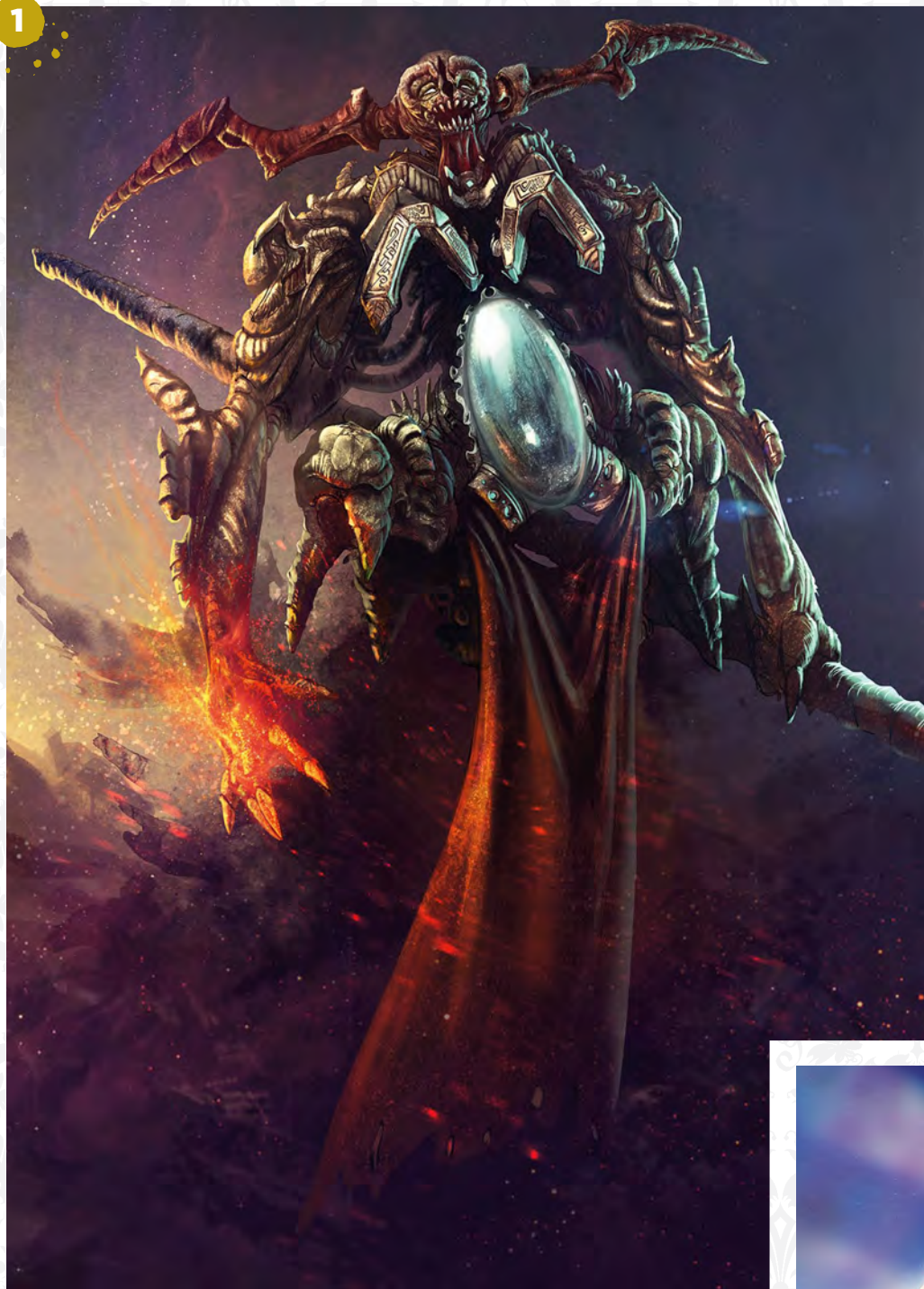


3 SHIPWRECK "This is concept art for a independent movie project called Nova Initia. I had fun doing all the detail for this piece; the chaotic nature of destroyed architecture makes the creation process both freeing and satisfying. I like the look of things with some wear and tear because it instantly gives the subject matter history."

3



1



Ahmed Rawi

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MEDIA: Photoshop, ZBrush, SketchBook Pro, Maya



Ahmed was 15 when, at school in Baghdad, he exhibited his first painting. He moved to Jordan and graduated in graphic

design, before steering his work more towards digital painting. He mastered Photoshop, but his work still begins life on paper. "I always keep my sketchbook and three types of pens and pencils in my side bag," Ahmed says, "ready for when ideas jump out of my mind."

The artist is comfortable using 2D and 3D software, and he aspires to work on AAA games or epic feature films.

1 THE SOUL REAPER "Finally he's free.

After a very long time - no one remembers how long - the demon has escaped from the prison of the human soul, a moment he's long waited for since the day he met a witch who imprisoned him in human form."

2 THE GIANT HORROR "All of a sudden, a huge bug-like creature walks out the woods and toward a group of villages. The people of those villages will do anything to stop it."

3 REVOLUTION "To a city in which crime has infested every building came a man, descending from the sky in a ship. He was able to create a force of law for the good people of the city. However, others decided to get rid of him. One night those men, disguised in masks, kidnapped the man and attached a helmet on his face. Then they banished him to a wasteland."

3



2



1



Blake Rottinger

LOCATION: Australia

WEB: www.blakerottinger.com

EMAIL: blakerottingerart@gmail.com

MEDIA: Photoshop



Blake always knew he wanted to create art for video games industry, but only became serious about his craft a couple of years ago. The works of Feng Zhu, Kalen Chock and David Holland inspired him. "I enjoy environment design the most – I get a lot of inspiration through my travels. I use a lot of photo techniques in my work, too, and I still have a lot more to learn and discover."

Blake is studying visual arts at Sydney University, and has worked on various commissions in the video games, film and industrial design industries.

2



3



1 THE BLACKSMITH "My aim was to create a seemingly hostile factory environment where the workers are in constant danger. I also wanted to blend a medieval feel with the steampunk genre, hence the blacksmith's anvil and shop as well as the boilers."

2 KINGS STUDY "This is part of a personal IP project I created for my course at university. It showcases the king's throne room. However, this king is obsessed with new technology and knowledge, and has the money to create his own little personal paradise."

3 CENOTE "For this piece I was heavily inspired by photos I took while I was in Mexico: the bright aqua Caribbean sea and the cenotes (a type of sinkhole). I wanted to bring a bit of a story into it, hence the temple ruins and the ladders leading out."

Sylvia Ritter

LOCATION: Germany

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MEDIA: Krita, GIMP, Inkscape, Blender, Alchemy



Self-taught artist Sylvia describes herself as a “late bloomer.” After an apprenticeship at a photographers’ agency, she decided to focus on art – both traditional and digital. “It took a long time to figure out what I wanted,” she says, “how I could express myself.”

Sylvia’s creative outlet came collaboratively with husband Leonard. The couple founded an indie game company, Duangle, and have successfully crowdfunded an “alien-life simulator” titled NOWHERE.

1



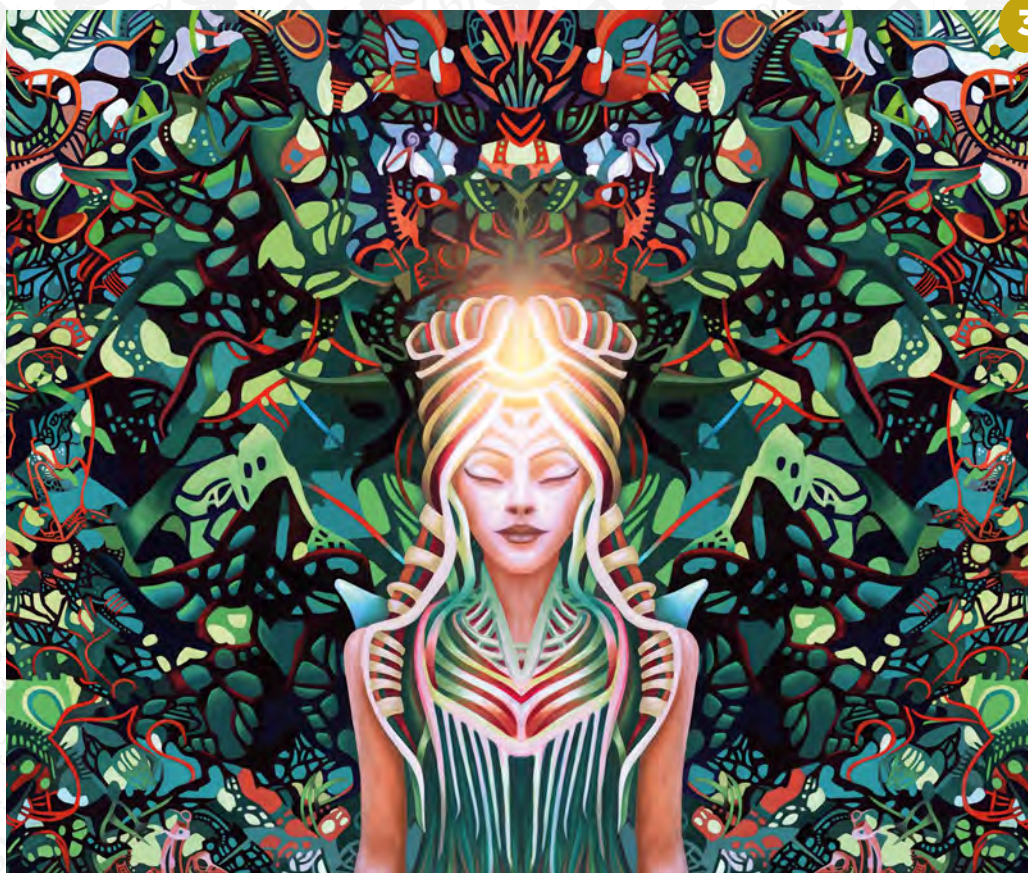
2



1 BITSTREAM OWL “I think of this as a snapshot of an owl, which existed for a short period of time before ceasing to exist forever. I love to decorate, so I added some interesting abstract patterns to the background.”

2 MINERVA “Minerva is a networking goddess flooded with information and bonding with other entities. The artwork has a psychedelic touch. I’m very fond of circuit board designs. Crazy hair is also fun to draw. She could be a Star Trek character.”

3 THE SACRIFICE “This shows a woman who symbolises many different cultures. I was born in the US, spent two and a half years in Beijing and lived the rest of my childhood in Germany. This could have subconsciously influenced her look.”



Nikolay Lobzov

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MEDIA: Photoshop, Painter



"I'm inspired by the old masters and modern monsters," says Nikolay. The concept artist and art director has over a

decade's experience in game development and the film industry, working both digitally and traditionally. "I like to work in different genres," the Moscow native says, "in which I try to show the victory of good over bad."

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"These images are full of clean colours and sharp detail

– there's a real bounce to Nikolay's paintings. And it's a testament to his skill at capturing his subject's character that he's made a figure as ubiquitous as Katniss seem new."

Beren Neale,
Digital Editor

1 ON BIG RED PANDA "One of my favourite animals is the red panda. Perhaps there was a time when they were so big you could ride them..."

2 KATNISS "This is my picture for the Moviefest challenge, which involved taking a character from any movie and reimagining them for a video game."

3 PIRATE ASSAULT "My work for the game Captain Blood. The piece shows a pirate's assault on the fort."

4 SPACE BOARDED "I wanted to portray a realistic battle in space."

SUBMIT YOUR ART TO FXPOSE

Send up to five pieces of your work, along with their titles, an explanation of your techniques, a photo of yourself and contact details. Images should be sent as 300DPI JPEG files.

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3



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4



ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS ImagineNation

AT THE CORE OF THE FANTASY ART COMMUNITY

Art from 2015 video game No Man's Sky. "A lead artist took pity on me," says artist Grant Duncan about his big break.



Fallen Romeo, by Hugo Martin, who says all aspiring games artists should aim to master anatomy.



As well as video games Hugo has worked as a concept artist in films.



Get into games

Level up Industry-leading artists on how to land your dream job in video games



Grant Duncan once spent a whole week working up rubbish bins - nothing but rubbish bins. He's now sole artist at the British developer behind space-explorer No Man's Sky, a video game so expansive it would take players some five billion years to visit each planet in its universe.

There was a lot of legwork in between. A creative visualisation student at Teesside University, Grant signed with a string of agencies after graduating, eventually

landing a job as a character artist for Warhammer Online.

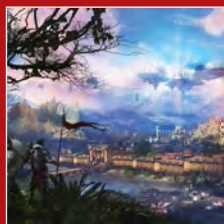
"I was very lucky," he says. "I got the job and my sordid love affair with game art has been going ever since. I can only assume the lead artist took pity on me, because my portfolio was far from outstanding."

"If I could give advice to my younger self, then it would be to finish more - so much of my portfolio was half-finished pieces. I see a lot of portfolios now, and nothing really beats a good, finished, polished piece of art. It shows that you're capable of sticking with



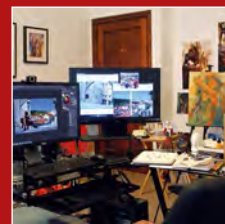
FROM THE GROUND UP

We talk to artist Marko Djurdjevic about the anniversary edition of cult, post-apocalypse tabletop-game DEGENESIS - and the future of Primal Punk. **Page 23**



SEOUL BROTHERS

Young Bum Kim tells us how the Seoul-based Popartist illustration agency will help top South Korean artists get seen on the world stage. **Page 25**



NEW YORK NIGHT OWL

US-based Taiwanese illustrator Han-Yuan Yu, aka B.c.N.y., often starts painting at 3pm and works well into the morning. And he calls it "a great privilege"! **Page 26**



No Man's Sky artwork © Hello Games



Sniper Ravine, by Lord Cockswain-creator Greg Broadmore.

something, and that you have a good eye for detail."

A good eye for detail has proved essential in Grant's work for Hello Games. The Guildford-based developer is set to release No Man's Sky, initially on PlayStation 4, in 2015. Procedurally generated - content created algorithmically by a host computer, as opposed to prepackaged artwork - the game will feature over 18 quintillion (yes that's a real number) different worlds.

PLAYING GOD

It's a far cry from rubbish bins. Working on a project of such scope and scale reminds Grant why he got into games in the first place. He encourages all fledgling artists to invent their own worlds and the creatures within them. To create backstories, narratives. To "play God."

"I'm a firm believer in game artists being game artists. But don't just sit back and create assets: get involved in conversations with coders and designers. It'll give you an understanding and respect for the different roles. The lines have never been more blurred between disciplines. There's no

“Join online communities. Show your work. Surround yourself with artists”

reason for an artist to feel they can't make their own game: the tools are out there."

Grant has tips for breaking into the industry. Join online communities - he prefers Polycount. Show your work as soon and often as you can: critique is essential. Surround yourself with artists you admire - if not in person, then virtually. Approach those you like, but don't pester them. Create a simple, easy-to-navigate portfolio. Keep it separate from your blog: art directors need to see your best work quickly and easily.

"What I know now that I didn't fully understand back when I was younger," Hugo Martin says, "is that it's not about talent. It's all about the mileage."



Hugo is a concept artist with over 10 years' experience in the games industry - most recently at id Software, the Dallas-based development

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

DAREN BADER

The Rockstar artist says play to your strengths to break into games

How does an artist break into the games industry?

Focus on the companies that make the games you like. If you're a hardcore World of Warcraft fan, concentrate on a style of work that lends itself to Blizzard's properties. Attend industry shows such as E3, PAX or Comic-Con. Meet people who work in the field. Bring a portfolio and set up interviews with companies and art directors. It sounds obvious, but visit your favourite company's jobs page - see what's available. And be prepared to go through a lot of interviews.

Artistic ones aside, what skills must you have?

It's essential to have excellent communication skills - and flexibility. Huge teams make games, and every person has their own personality. So the better you can work with people, the more successful you and your team will be. Also, learn to roll with changing technology and not to be afraid of it. There's no room for stubbornness when evolving technology is involved.

Why should an artist create their own game?

Creating your own world and characters is a great exercise in understanding relationships. Weapons, structures, characters, streetlights, rocks, plants, vehicles, clothing and on and on - they all have to be related in both subtle and obvious ways. They have to be believable, all part of the same world. It's up to art directors and concept artists to visualise virtually every inch of the world, and the most successful game worlds are ones that have a unified wash of stylisation and coherence.



Chesley Award-nominated Daren lives in San Diego, California, where he works for Rockstar Games.

www.darenbader.blogspot.com



➡ company behind Doom, Quake and Rage. The American's big break came through hard work, persistence and patience – the mileage. He didn't hear anything for months after sending his portfolio to Wizards of the Coast, the company that offered him his first paid gig.

GOOD IMPRESSIONS

The medium may have changed, but the principles remain the same. Hugo says artists should carry portable device to show art directors and potential clients their portfolio. Visit events artists attend – cons or expos, for example. Try and put your work in front of as many people as you possibly can.

"Approach anyone and everyone who's a working artist at these events," Hugo says. "You never know who you're talking to or

who they may know. There's always a chance you'll make a good impression and that could lead to something. You have to be ready with your business cards to hand out. Being a good communicator is important. Being polite and humble never hurts."

On a practical level, Hugo stresses the importance of mastering anatomy: "Get Andrew Loomis' book, Creative Illustration, lock yourself in a room with it and don't come out until you've memorised every page of it." While he sees creating your own game as a good exercise – "just to scratch

“Try and put your work in front of as many people as you possibly can”



No Man's Sky artwork © Hello Games

that creative itch" – he says time is more wisely spent working on an existing story.

"Use an IP that's already out there as the basis for your portfolio projects. It's easier that way and you'll learn more about what it's like to be a real working artist in the games industry. Nine times out of 10, in this business, you'll be working on an existing IP. So it pays to practise."

Greg Broadmore can see both sides of this debate. He recently took his own



creation to an established developer to realise his dream of directing his own game. For over a decade Greg's worked at film special effects and prop company Weta Workshop. But his heart, he says, is and always has been in video games.

CREATIVE CONCESSIONS

Magic Leap is the developer helping bring Lord Cockswain to life and it's a dream come true. But the Kiwi says once clients, directors and producers get involved, you may well have to make concessions in your creativity. These are the rules of the game for those looking to break into a competitive industry.

"I think it's impossible not to imagine creating your own game," Greg says. "If you're a creative person, these ideas just spring up. They should be followed wherever they lead. But games are colossal exercises in creative problem solving, and that's a collaborative thing. You need to revel in collaborative creativity. Even if the direction is not your own, anything you create is guided through your hand." ●



"For Earth's survivors, everything is at stake. Fight back, or be replaced and forgotten. Forever."

Survival of the fittest

Primal punk Artist Marko Djurdjevic on the anniversary edition of cult game DEGENESIS

It's been 500 years since asteroids wiped out civilisation as we know it. Those who survived emerged from five centuries of darkness to find the falling rocks brought with them a virus which mutated homo sapiens into apex predators known as Homo degenesis.

"Homo sapien was once the king,"



Marko Djurdjevic explains.

"But Homo degenesis is trying to wrestle away the crown. For Earth's survivors, everything is at stake. Fight back, or be

replaced and forgotten. Forever."

DEGENESIS is the tabletop role-playing game (RPG) created, back in 2003, by artist Marko and author Christian Guenther. The

latest edition continues to follow adventurers in a post-apocalyptic wasteland the inventors call Primal Punk.

"The Rebirth Edition is a milestone," Marko says. "It collects a decade of development into one grand finale."

What separates DEGENESIS from other RPGs, its creator says, is that artists, illustrators and concept designers build the game from the ground up. The emphasis is on world building, visual narrative and functionality. "You simply don't have that in other RPGs," Marko says. "Game designers normally make up their story and share it with authors. Artists come in at a later stage, to embellish what's already established."

The RPG is just one aspect of DEGENESIS. SIXMOREVODKA, the Berlin-based studio behind the game, is set to continue expanding the title into other media, taking Primal Punk into a novel, comic books and beyond.

"Primal Punk is all about rebirth," Marko says. "Rebirth of civilisation, hope and overcoming the odds of a great catastrophe. Historically, mankind never gives up easily."

For more information on DEGENESIS visit www.degenesis.com.



The Rebirth Edition contains over 300 pieces of art.



From the ashes of a civilisation, a new one has risen, and will fight for world dominance.

FRESH PAINT

Your art news that's grabbed our attention



Tony Eight
@tony_eight

"Some quick insect study sketches from today. Found some cool-looking bugs..."
<http://ifxm.ag/fresh-tony>



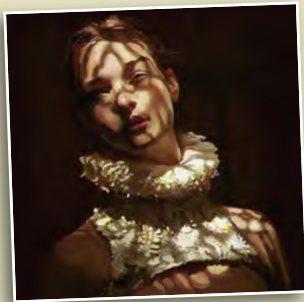
Nathan Fowkes Art
@NathanFowkesArt

"Portrait study, compressed charcoal and Nupastel on Strathmore paper."
<http://ifxm.ag/fresh-nathan>



Kuvshinov Ilya
@KR0NPR1NZ

"One-hour #study."
<http://ifxm.ag/fresh-ilya>



Just finished something you want us to shout about? Send it our way on Twitter (@imaginefx), or find us on Facebook!



Hatboy
by Vaughn Pinpin



Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

"However good your concept might seem, your spaceship might come back looking like a duck. We've all been there!"

We think that *Elite: Dangerous* concept artist Josh Attack has a new idea for a game... Page 64

Beyond Infinity

Second coming How the team behind Disney Infinity 2.0 recreated some of Marvel's most famous faces for the action adventure title



The challenge Jeff Bunker and his team faced was staying true to Marvel's vision of its superheroes, while ensuring each had the look and feel of a Disney character.

Jeff is studio art director at Avalanche Software, the outfit behind Disney Infinity 2.0: Marvel Super Heroes. The game features familiar faces reimagined as collectable figures that come to life.

"There's a range of stylistic options with these kinds of abstracted figures," Jeff says. "Marvel and Disney Infinity brands are all about the character, so we needed to find a point that enables each character to be who he or she was, but still look believable."

A key feature of the game is its Toy Box mode, which gives users the chance to customise the open-world environment and the rules within it. Yet ensuring characters interact correctly with these customisable



The god of thunder, as realised by Jeff and his team at Avalanche.

worlds also proved problematic: "We have a central mechanics team that works on all characters," Jeff says. "The Toy Box team must work with them to understand how to build the environment to accommodate all of the abilities provided by the mechanics team. The only way this gets done is because of the amazing people working on it."

You can check out the game in action at <http://infinity.disney.com>.



Baekji's depiction of the dramatic scenery surrounding Hanakas Castle, from the game of the same name.

© WeMade Entertainment Co.

Art in Seoul

Korean creatives Young Bum Kim's on a mission to ensure South Korean artists get seen on the world stage

South Korea is home to a wealth of talented artists, but many struggle to find work outside of their homeland because they can't speak English and don't know how to market their art. That's according to Young Bum Kim, one of the founders of illustration agency Popartist, who's aiming to bring South Korean creatives to a wider audience.



"Korean artists are world-renowned for their quality and efficiency," Young Bum says, "but since they lack communication skills, they have difficulties breaking into the mainstream."

Young Bum founded Popartist after investing in an illustrator friend's artbook. At the time he was working at a sports media company. He was inspired to attend several conventions and, after seeing the

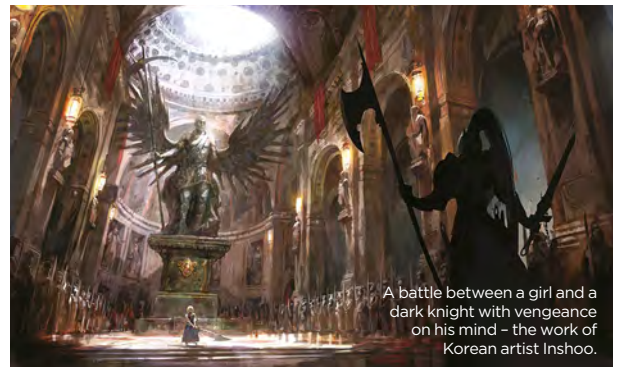
talent on show, decided to use his knowledge of media and marketing to promote Korean artists.

Popartist now boasts a roster of a dozen artists and counting. Young Bum and partner Jun Seok Yoon meet prospective artists face to face, before signing them and committing to building their name as a brand and promoting their work to international companies.

"Our agency doesn't just wait for clients to contact us. We're very proactive and are keen to promote our illustrators directly to foreign companies.

"At the moment we only use our very best artists to represent us, but our aim is to grow and show companies around the world what our new, promising prospects can do."

Find out who's on the books at Popartist by visiting www.popartist.co.kr.



A battle between a girl and a dark knight with vengeance on his mind - the work of Korean artist Inshoo.



In Joan the Arc, Inshoo aims to show a softer side to the fierce heroine of France.



Korean artist Named shows a future in which people travel around the world on a large mechanised vessel.

© Nexon Co.



I love toys and figures, but I didn't bring any of them to America except this one. She's my favourite, and when I'm tired I can look at her and regain my energy.

Although the details of this sculpture's hair aren't perfect, it's excellent as a reference piece for shadow and light across the face.



Han-Yuan Yu

Late-night tales The Taiwanese illustrator – better known as B.c.N.y. – on why a freelancer's greatest privilege is working until 6am



My studio is just a few steps from my bed. I have a three-piece corner desk for my computer equipment. I use a HP desktop and Intuos4 tablet. My double-screen system – 24 and 27-inch screens – enables me to draw and review references at the same time.

I recently moved the desk from the corner to the centre of the room, because I felt miserable facing the walls and squeezing myself into such a small space. I love being

surrounded by art books and references, which I use as sources of inspiration.

The space next to my desk is my inking station. I won this gigantic draft board for coming first in a Dare2Draw competition. I don't use it often, but I like to have it around – it looks very professional. Behind the desk is my oil-painting station. I learned to paint with oils studying on the MFA program at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York.

It's hard to recreate in oils the same colours that I can paint digitally. However, I

enjoy how paint looks on canvas – all those individual strokes and textures. Using oils always teaches me something new, which then helps with rendering colours and creating strokes digitally.

When I wake up, the first thing I do is check emails, commissions, Facebook and other social network sites. I like to brew a cup of fresh ground coffee; it's like my on-switch for the day. I usually start working around 3pm. The routine of my daily life is irregular. I'm used to going to

Sometimes I stream my drawing process online. I bought this high-tech microphone for chatting and singing while I'm drawing. But there seems to be a connection issue with it. I found that the microphone on my webcam is easier to use. But I will get this microphone working one day!

One of my favourite accessories is a piece of Chinese traditional decoration. Because of its high price, I could only buy a small one. I want to get the whole set of these decorations some day.



It's hard to resist buying art books. I collect books related to Taiwan's aboriginal culture, accessories and everything else I'm interested in. Although the internet is a convenient source of information, seeing real pictures on the page is a totally different experience. You can observe every detail with greater clarity.

bed late – between 4 and 6am – when I don't need to wake up early the next day. This is one of the great privileges of being a freelance illustrator.

I do love being outside, sketching streets and pedestrians. But I'm most happy in front of my lovely computer – drawing every day, from morning till night.

Han-Yuan is a freelance illustrator from Taiwan. He lives in New York City and studies at the Fashion Institute of Technology. You can see his art at <http://ifxm.ag/b-c-n-y>.

Painting with oils enables me to explore different ways of rendering colours. However, it's frustrating having to wait for those paints to dry on canvas. In the end, my entire painting process is me roughly putting every paint on my palette on to the canvas.



The reason I love this place is that I can stick the references I need on the draft board and the walls around the room. I complete the line work here, scan it into my computer and finish them digitally. I'm happy with the results. Sometimes I use watercolours or acrylics here, too.



Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Claire Howlett, on claire@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK



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Submitting art

Hello! Hope you're having a great day! A friend has strongly suggested that I submit a few samples of my work and see if I could get published through your amazing magazine. So I'm taking a chance and taking his advice.

However, I'm unfamiliar with the necessary steps one would have to take to be considered for inclusion in ImagineFX. I would love to learn how and talk further. I have attached a nice PDF sample for your convenience and consideration.

Thank you once again ImagineFX! Keep up the incredible work! Looking forward to talking further with you.

Angelita Ramos, via email

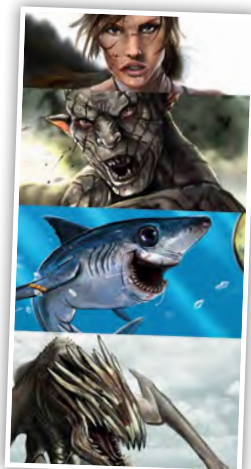
Claire replies Thanks for writing in, Angelita, and for sending in your art. The most straightforward way for artists to get their work published in ImagineFX is in our FXPosé section. You'll find more details about how to submit your art for consideration on page 18 of this issue.

Life imitating art

I just wanted to write in and say how much I enjoy ImagineFX each month – I've been a subscriber for several years and love my word-free covers! But more to the point, I wanted to say how insightful and useful your story on the Art of Imitation was, in issue 114. As a new artist, and with so many high-quality images seemingly available for free on the internet, I think I could easily have made the mistake of including something "borrowed" from elsewhere in an image of mine, especially when photobashing, without really thinking about it. It was fascinating to see that even top artists make mistakes like this. Thank you for the wake-up call.

Barry Johnson, via email

Claire replies Thanks for getting in touch, Barry. I'm glad the story struck a chord with



Angelita asked how best to submit art work into ImagineFX. Answers on page 18!



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 114?

Visit our shop at <http://ifxm.ag/ifxstore> for details on this edition and other special offers, too.



When borrowing becomes stealing, as covered in issue 114. It's a relevant topic for digital artists.

you – and hopefully other ImagineFX readers. The internet is a wonderful thing, of course. But it can also cause us problems, moral and legal. It's a reminder that all art should be your own, original work. Which is more satisfying anyway.

Animator!

Hello Claire and everyone at ImagineFX. I wanted to write to tell you how much I enjoyed the animation special (issue 113) recently: it really opened my eyes to a different type of art. I also enjoyed the focus on Moonbot Studios – I want to work there one day! – and especially their refreshing idealism, captured in Brandon Oldenburg's quote, "We look through the eyes of our younger selves, to keep our adult selves in check." It's great to know that in the art world we don't ever have to properly grow up! Looking forward to the next animation issue (and every issue in between).

Antonia Adams, via email

Claire replies I totally agree Antonia, and I'm so pleased that you enjoyed issue 113. The animation industry produces countless amazing artists, and we wanted to put the focus on them with our cover and its workshop... but we have had many amazing animation artists in before, and we'll feature them again, regardless of the cover theme. Thanks for writing in.

Hard to find in stores

First of all, a big thank you for making a great magazine. My inner artist has been trying to find his voice for years now, and I try to buy a copy of ImagineFX whenever I can to keep him happy.

But it can be hard to find your magazine on the shelves where I live, especially if the copies in Barnes & Noble have sold out. It's sooo far to the next store, and though I like a long drive as much as anyone, I'd like to know if there are any plans on making the magazine available in a wider range of smaller shops around the mid-West?

Kenny Hanson, via email

Claire replies Thanks for your email Kenny. We'd love to sell ImagineFX in every store in the universe, but if you want every issue, every month, you should definitely look at our great subscription deals. See page 30 for details.



Our star letter writer wins a dA Premium Membership!

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Help please!

I've been a fan of ImagineFX for some years now. I purchase the magazine every month and find the resources very useful.

Like a lot of creative people, I have an overactive imagination and I'm glued to my drawing table all day, every day. Ever since I was old enough to hold a pencil and realise what it could do, I was hooked. It was my escape into an alternate world. But despite my passion, it's still hard to get anywhere. I've worked commercially, I got a first in my degree and I still make people's jaws drop with what I can do. I'm a traditional artist in every sense.

I've written to many people and places and generally don't get a reply. Could you offer some help in how I would go freelance? I always wanted to be in game design, or illustrating for film or comics.

I know you must get a thousand letters like this every week, but I feel as though I'm sitting on wasted talent. I've tried everything and I'm stuck. I would be grateful for any advice you could offer, and if you ever need some art for the magazine, just let me know! You can see my work here: <http://ifxm.ag/s-timms>.
Stephen, via email

Claire replies Stephen, thanks so much for writing in. I'm sure your predicament mirrors that of many of our readers. You've had some training, your early work seems to affect people, but how do you get that big break in the industry? Luckily, you write in at just the right time, because on page 20 we've spoken to pro artists in the games industry about how they got their breaks – and the tips they want to pass on to aspiring professional artists. There's some really good advice there that I hope will help you make the next step. But we certainly welcome more feedback from other artists – and aspiring artists – as to how they got their big break and any other advice they can share.

*The saving is based on purchasing 14 single issues a year of the Apple Newsstand Edition.



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December 2014 **ImagineFX**



ImagineFX^{NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS} Back Issues

Missed an issue of ImagineFX?
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previous editions are available
for you to download today!

Issue 114

November 2014

Charlie Bowater's gorgeous cover image kicks off an issue that'll help you create stunning digital art. Tony Foti explains how to use Photoshop's key tools, James Gurney breaks the rules of composition to great effect, Don Seegmiller's texture advice will help you take your art to the next level, and Te Hu's sculpting approach to digital portraits is a must-read!



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Issue 113

October 2014

This month we're helping you break into the exciting animation industry. Pramin Phatiphong makes a 2D character design look 3D, Mingjue Helen Chen designs a set for animation, and ex-Disney artist Chris Oatley helps you to turn pro. Elsewhere, Michael C Hayes paints a knight and Brian Froud reveals his art influences.



Issue 112

September 2014

The Pre-Raphaelite art movement provides the inspiration for Corrado Vanelli, whose painting graces our cover, and Katarina Sokolova who reimagines Ophelia. Elsewhere, Donglu Yu constructs a city using textures, Mike Corriero concepts fantasy beasts, and Wylie Beckert translates her digital skills to traditional media.



Issue 111

August 2014

Jeff Simpson's eerie cover image sets the tone for this issue, as we reveal the secrets to painting dark, unsettling art with Anthony Scott Waters, Xavier Collette, and the man behind many iconic horror posters, Graham Humphreys. We also talk to Les Edwards, whose fantasy and horror work is instantly recognisable.



Issue 110

July 2014

Find out why so many artists, including John Howe, Lorland Chen and Brom, are attracted to illustrating stories that have passed down the centuries. We explore the comic art of Claire Wendling, Cynthia Sheppard brings a Greek goddess to life, and Tran Nguyen reinterprets the classic damsel in distress narrative.



CATCH UP ON WHAT YOU'VE MISSED!



Issue 109

June 2014

On Batman's 75th anniversary, we look at the dark art of Gotham's infamous vigilante, with imagery from Jock, Frank Miller, Neal Adams and more, while DC Comics' Ken Lashley creates our cover. We also explore Simone Bianchi's sketchbook, draw a Wolverine fight scene and find out how a Fables cover is painted.



Issue 108

May 2014

This issue we explore the art of the Seven Kingdoms with our Game Of Thrones special. Mélanie Delon paints Daenerys Targaryen for our cover and we talk to the key creatives on the show, and even chat with its creator George RR Martin about his vision for the stories. All this, plus even more great art, tips and workshops!



Issue 107

April 2014

By adding in beautifully detailed Taiwanese aboriginal costumes, cover artist Han-Yuan Yu has given his manga art a distinct look. Christopher Moeller paints comics in a traditional way, Serge Kolesov depicts a mermaid from a new perspective, and Wayne Reynolds tells us how he turned a boring art job into something fun!



Issue 106

March 2014

Celebrating the power of book illustration, we speak to Cory Godbey about his ethereal art and to Tony DiTerlizzi about his motion picture-inspiring art. Cory and Tony give us tutorials, too, on creature design and book covers, respectively. There's a studio profile on Tor Books, and a look at Brian Froud's latest work.



Issue 105

February 2014

We talk to the artists behind some of the most beautiful female paintings in the universe in our pin-up special - from a sassy roller-girl covergirl to amazing art from Adam Hughes, Serge Biraault and Sorayama. Elsewhere, we delve into the world of tattoo art, and give advice on artist's block and softening your painting style.



Issue 104

January 2014

This month's artists will help you push your painting skills into untapped areas, with advice on creating art from smoke brushes, developing your artistic voice, plus our traditional art workshop on painting a frog princess! Simon Dominic revives an old concept, and we reveal the winners of this year's Rising Stars contest.



Issue 103

Christmas 2014

Discover the art skills you'll need to break into the competitive video games industry, as we speak to the people behind The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt, Star Wars: The Force Unleashed, Remember Me and Mass Effect. Traditional fantasy artist Tom Kidd paints a book cover, and Dave Kendall puts Manga Studio 5 to the test.



Issue 102

December 2013

Traditional skills meet digital methods in Jean-Sébastien Rossbach's cover art, which also heralds a new section in the magazine that's devoted to bringing you the best in traditional fantasy art. We talk to Daren Bader and Keith Thompson about their inspirations, while Jim Pavlec brings a gothic creation to life.

Artist Q&A

GOT A QUESTION FOR OUR EXPERTS? LET US EASE YOUR ART-ACHE AT **HELP@IMAGINEFX.COM**



The NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX panel

Mark Molnar



Freelancer Mark is a concept and visual development artist for the entertainment industry, painting for international film, game and animation companies.

www.markmolnar.com

Sara Forlenza



Sara's a freelance illustrator living in northern Italy, where she works on book covers, digital card products and role-playing games. She's also a keen PC gamer.

www.saraforlenza.deviantart.com

John Petersen



An education in biological and pre-medical illustration led US-based John to become an animator and designer at Engineering Systems, Inc. He's also a freelance illustrator.

www.petersenart.com

Damian Schouweiler



Damian's worked in games for over a decade. He started his career as a 3D character artist, but now mostly applies his skill set to concept art and illustration.

www.anotherdamian.deviantart.com

Naiha Raza



Naiha is a self-taught digital artist from Pakistan. She works in the video games industry not only as an illustrator, but also as a graphic designer.

www.nrzaa.deviantart.com

Dave Brascalla



Dave is a graphic designer and illustrator from Stockholm who works digitally and traditionally. He recently organised the Northern Light Workshop series.

www.pixelhuset.se

Question

Can you help me paint a person in the rain?

Ruby Perez, US

Answer Sara replies



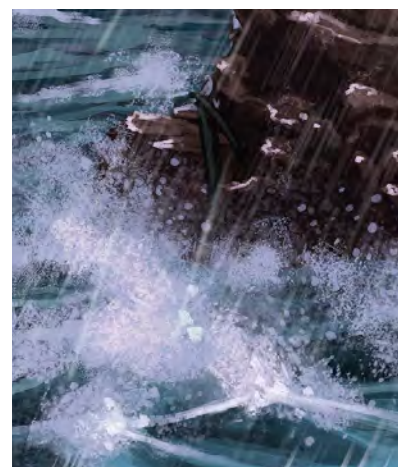
There are three important factors to keep in mind while painting a character caught in a rain storm: the atmosphere in the image, the effect of water on a body, and how the water drops create an opaque halo around the subject. A cloudy sky turns the scene dark, and the few rays of light that filter through them will be dim and cold-looking. So it's appropriate to choose cool and unsaturated colours, and adjust the light level depending on the time of day in



By using desaturated colours and painting wet surfaces and visible rain drops, we can create a convincing rain storm scene.

the image. The character's skin, hair and clothing will be strongly influenced by the atmosphere in the artwork and this will sell the image to the viewer.

To simulate the wet effect on the skin you should use a very bright colour with your brush strokes, which indicates that the water is reflecting light. Next, paint a foggy, indistinct area where the rain hits the character. You could also add a few little light touches to paint drops that bounce off the character.



Select a rough textured brush, add Scattering and paint where the water splashes on to rocks.

Artist's secret

SATURATION,
BRIGHTNESS AND
CONTRAST

All three of these options should be reduced to create dull colours, low brightness, and contrast created by the mist that's seen on rainy days. The only exception is the touches of reflected light on the skin, to simulate the wet effect.



Step-by-step: Compose a rainy environment



1 I start by tackling the background that, although relatively simple, is crucial for determining my character's environment. In this case it's a seascape, which is stormy, dark, grey and foggy. When I'm satisfied with my background, I select the flat colours for my character that match the mood of the scene.



2 I start with the rendering. I choose a cold and diffuse ambient light that's appropriate for the environment. I lay down shadows with a warmer colour, then select a Hard brush and simulate the appearance of wet skin. With a Soft brush I paint a halo of mist on the head, arms and shoulders and small droplets around it.



3 Next, I add the rain on a new layer. I choose a light colour and create a regular dotted surface. Then I go to Filter> Blur> Motion Blur and, depending on the type of rain that I want to show, I choose the parameters. If the result is too static then I can add some drops at different angles, to make the image more realistic.

Question

What's a rim light, and when and why should I use it in my sci-fi art?

Jennifer Malvern, US



Rim light can strengthen the visual impact of your images. Use it to frame the main subject, and to bring back more details in the silhouettes.

Answer Mark replies



Rim light is a light source placed behind your main subjects. It's most commonly used in photography and films, where the focus is on one or more characters in front of a darker background. The back light creates an outline of light around the character or portrait, which frames them and separates them from the background.

I've noticed that rim light has become overused in concept art and illustration, but it's definitely an effective useful lighting technique to use under appropriate lighting conditions. Its origins are in standard three-point lighting in portrait photography and other visual mediums. A photographer places three main light sources

around the subject to obtain the most amount of visual information possible: the main light; the fill light that's essentially an artificial bounce light of the main light to show details in the shadow areas; and the rim light to add details to the edges and frame of the scene. I would advise using rim light if you're keen to enhance the details in your character's silhouettes with framing, and if you'd like to separate them from the background.

Note that rim light isn't just about the actual lighting conditions, but also about creating a certain mood. It works best if you want to create the feeling of suspense and mystery, or simply exaggerate the visual intensity of your image.



It's easy to achieve a mysterious effect with just pure rim lighting, but be careful: without a main or fill light you may not be able to show your character as clearly as you want.

Artist's secret

COLoured LIGHT SOURCES



You can add extra depth to your art if you differentiate the temperature of your light sources. Here I use a colder, less-saturated colour for the rim light and a warmer, more saturated colour for my main light, which brings the character closer to the viewer.

Question

Can you help me design a tribal medicine man's mask?

Asha Limbach, England

Answer

Mark replies

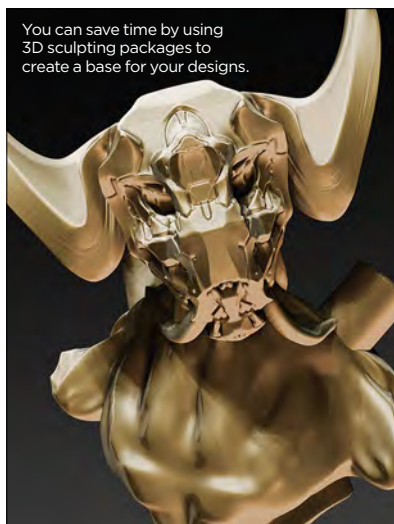


For this question I'm designing a medicine man in a post-apocalyptic world, and I'm keen to show the attributes of that world in the character's costume, in particular his mask.

Bear in mind that the medicine men of tribal societies weren't just doctors – they were also the connection between humans and the spiritual world, and their costume usually reflected this. Their masks symbolised how the tribe or that society imagined a supernatural power. So you can suggest a lot of things with this mask and its decoration, including the technological level of the group, their beliefs and their past history.

I always try to create a story to support my character designs, so for this character I imagine that a war has wiped out most of the planet's population. The survivors have slowly regressed to tribal societies living in areas unaffected by the fighting. After the passing of centuries the tribes no longer remember what happened to the 'ancients' and their most precious objects would probably be the remnants of days gone by.

I thought it would be cool to show this connection, so I imagine a high-tech helmet, decorated with bullet casings from the war and also some more classical tribal elements and paint. I want to explore how the original high-tech soldiers could have



You can save time by using 3D sculpting packages to create a base for your designs.

looked like, so I jumped into ZBrush and create a quick sculpt of their helmet. After doing some quick renders straight from ZBrush and gathering some references and photo textures, I start to build up my character using photo manipulation and digital painting techniques combined with the 3D base of the helmet. After mixing the different elements I add some wear and rust to show the age of the objects and finish it with some tribal painting, which is the final visual connection between the mask and the character's body.

Always try to come up with your own story behind your characters – this will make them memorable.



Artist's secret



PAINTING EXTRA VISUAL INFORMATION
I use Overlay and Soft Light layers to introduce rust, scratches and other aspects of wear and tear. This enables me to control the extra elements more precisely, without affect any visual information that I've already painted.

Use a smooth brush for the suckers and a textured brush for the upper surface.



Question

Can you help me paint the detail of octopus tentacles?

Simon Durant, England

Answer

John replies



Octopus tentacles (which are arms, to be more accurate) are made up of two surfaces. There's the upper, rough part, which tends to be roughly textured, and the lower surface containing the suckers, which is generally smooth. There are many variations found in real life, so don't feel like you need to stick with the pattern I'm drawing here.

Both surfaces will generally have glossy highlights, but feel free to try different combinations and colours. Just look at an animal visual encyclopaedia or do an

internet search for 'cephalopod' and you'll find plenty of ideas.

Here I've chosen a classical archetype of paired suckers with an overall reddish hue. I give the upper part a bumpy, glossy texture using custom brushes and keep the suckers relatively smooth and glossy, but overall maintaining a loose, painterly style. I spend an hour working on the image, but I'm sure I could spend much longer refining the detail and cleaning things up. The important thing is to first subdivide the two surfaces, then sketch in rough oval shapes for the suckers. Always work big to small.





Question

What's the best way to paint muscles illuminated by firelight?

David Lucas, England

Answer

Sara replies



A muscular character whose body is illuminated by firelight is a classic fantasy composition. The trick is

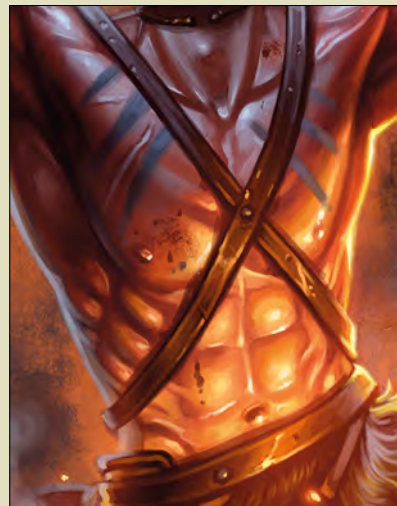
finding an efficient way of painting such a scene. First, I have to decide where the fire is. If I'm portraying a barbarian then a light coming from below will help to emphasise the strength and power of the character. Furthermore, using a cold ambient light will make him stand out even more.

When a light source is very strong and bright, the original colours of any affected objects are significantly altered by the hue of the light. In this case the muscles of the barbarian will feature a range of warm colours: browns in the shadows, and oranges and yellows in brighter areas. It's crucial to keep in mind the light source and where the shadows are projected.

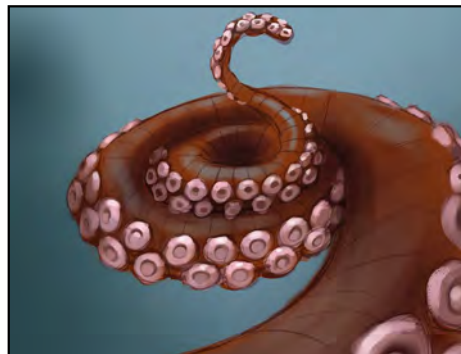
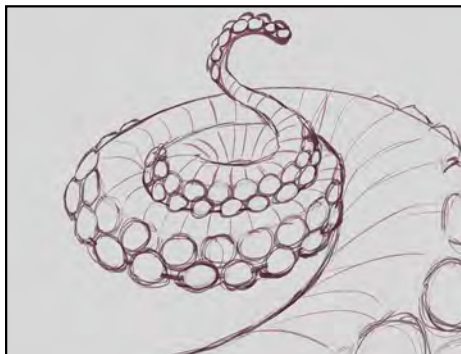
A light source at floor level means the top of the scene will be in shadow and I can build on this effect with ambient light. Clothes and various objects will cast their shadows upwards and this will help to give credibility to the character. I define the muscles of the belly, ensuring that they're anatomically correct, and in the areas of bright light I add touches of very pale yellow to accentuate the three-dimensional appearance of the barbarian's abdominals.

Painting a rough sketch of the light-shadow contrast and then slowly adding details helps me to define the barbarian's anatomy.

Once the artwork is finished it's easy to see how shadows and ambient light make the fire-lit muscle structure stand out effectively.



Step-by-step: Draw and paint a tentacle



- 1 First I loosely sketch in the basic shapes, playing with the pose until I achieve something on the canvas that I like. Then I sketch in a line to separate the two surfaces. I add contour lines to help me later on with the texture, and rough in oval shapes for the suckers.
- 2 I add a watery background gradient, and apply diffuse colours and lighting with a basic Round broad brush. The tentacle will be a red/magenta, but the light source from above will cast blue highlights. I'll pick colour from this with the Eyedropper tool as I paint.
- 3 I start working smaller, moving around the piece and adding more bits of detail. I sketch a note to remind me of my light source. I add a few specular highlights at a time and use those contour lines to help me paint in the upper surface arm texture.

Question

What's the best way to paint a campfire scene set at night?

Kenneth Browning, Scotland



Answer

Dave replies



A campfire scene might sound daunting at first, but it also opens up many intriguing possibilities for building an exciting image. With a little work you can get a lot of colour and interest into your scene, even though it's night time!

Start by considering that you're not only limited to your fire as a source of light. You can have background twilight, moonlight for rim lighting, and bounced firelight on surrounding rocks, trees, structures and clouds. Torches or second fires can add even more variation. Your figures can be both frontally lit by the fire and silhouetted

against it, creating instant depth in your composition, and you can introduce a smoke plume through the picture elements to reinforce the areas of interest.

If you want to try a simpler approach, consider the fact that fire itself can be colourful. All sorts of hues are visible in flames, so don't be afraid to use them – Frank Frazetta was a master of this approach. Even the night sky can hold colour possibilities: twilight can have very rich, deep blues and purples. Even with just a simplified compositional setup, you can still fill your campfire scene with vibrant colour.



I've painted this scene on an iPad using Procreate. I favour rougher, block pastel-like brushes with a bit of smeariness.



Artist's secret

CREATE A MICRO REFERENCE if you don't have the resources to shoot model reference for your campfire, you can shoot a quick lighting guide using your phone or tablet camera: grab a few toy figurines and a tea candle and create a miniature scene!

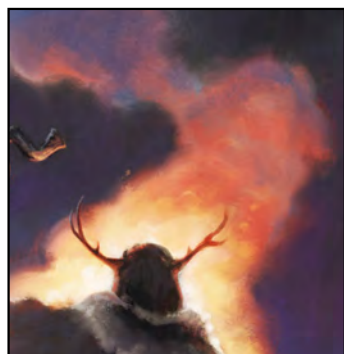
Step-by-step: Show a druid's fiery incantation



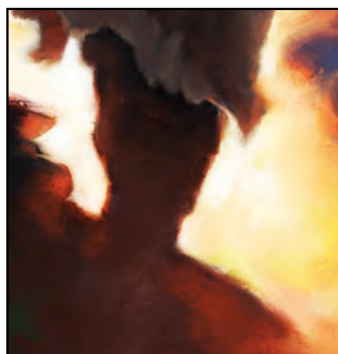
1 I create a few quick sketches and doodles, toying with using several characters, but I decide that a single silhouetted character would be strongest option. I always ask myself if I can simplify what I'm doing, and it helps to keep compositions from getting out of hand. The figure is inspired by someone I saw at a festival dressed as a fantasy druid.



2 I photograph my sketch with the iPad, and then in Procreate I carry out some blue-grey washes to help me establish the general value structure. I then decide to change the path of the smoke plume. Compositionally, I prefer the first one, but the new layout enables me to use contrast to better accent the head of the druid against the rising plume.



3 There are now lots of colour in the plume! The top of the plume is nearly the same colour as the lower bright edge of the night sky. Think about the warm light from fire below revealing the three-dimensional form of the blueish smoke plume. I ensure that the colours are saturated near the value transition areas, which gives the impression of brighter colour overall.



4 Here I am employing what James Gurney calls "colour corona", where a strong light source optically appears to be surrounded by intense colour. I tend to use this effect quite loosely, but even doing so creates the impression of very bright light. A night fire will also leave intense, colourful after-images in the human eye, and that's another inspiration for my painting approach here.



Question

I want to paint blood-splattered walls. Do you have any tips?

Cormac Maguire, US



Make sure the blood is fluid and bright where it's wet, and craggy and dark where it's drying.

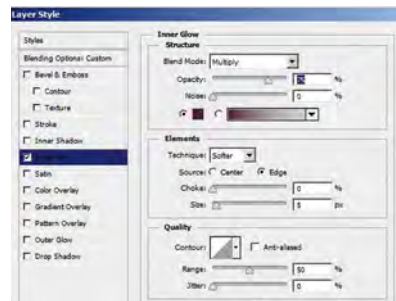
Answer

Damian replies



The key aspects to consider when painting blood are its translucency, hue and texture. Initially, fresh blood will be runny, translucent and shiny. As it dries out on a surface it becomes more opaque, more congealed and more matt in nature. Its colour changes from red to a deeper, darker yellow-brown.

I find that painting blood on its own layer with the blending mode set to Multiply is a great way to simulate blood's translucent qualities. Layer effects give the blood the illusion of being 3D. In the areas I want to represent as being older, I paint in a layer set to Normal blending mode and use a darker, yellower hue. I then put both of these layers in a group and attach a layer mask to the group. Painting in the mask, I can differentiate the texture, making it more spotty and runny in wet areas, and more craggy in dry ones.



Put your Wet blood on a Multiply layer with an Inner Glow layer effect, then set the Inner Glow's blend mode to Multiply. Set the colour to red.



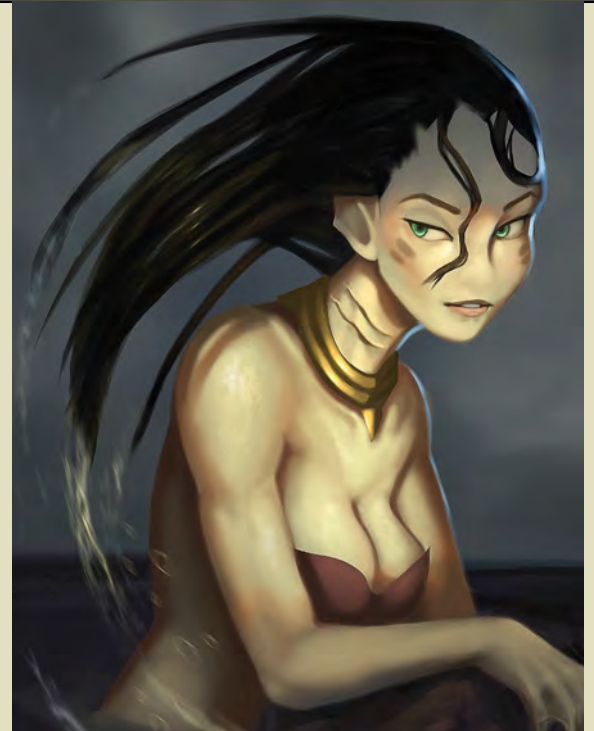
Artist's secret

ADD CHAOS TO YOUR DROPLETS
When painting liquids, using circle brushes with some scatter can go a long way towards giving your fluids a naturalistic, splattered look.

Question

Can you help me paint wet hair being flung in an arc?

Richard Gill, Canada



Study how water changes the hair, the flow of the hair and the anatomy of a single clump, before starting to paint.

Answer

Naiha replies



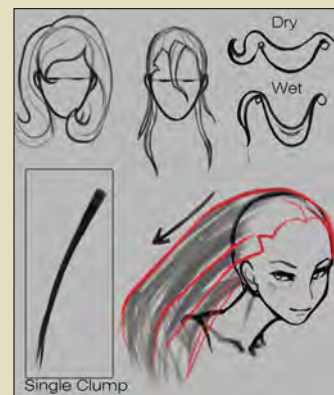
Wet hair needs to be treated differently compared to dry hair. Its properties change when it's drenched, and this needs to be clearly reflected in your art.

I use form to paint hair. First, I imagine the movement that I want to capture – in this case a dynamic hair flip. Next, I look for reference images for the finer details of how the movement should be portrayed: for example, the position of the head and hair at certain moments.

After I'm satisfied with the general pose of the character and their hair, I focus on how to give it the wet feel. Water changes the weight and the texture of hair dramatically. Hair strands become heavier and darker, and are reduced significantly in volume. It's also at its maximum length when it's wet, and strands tend to stick to each other, forming clumps.

When wet hair moves in an arc, it'll be straighter than dry hair. The clumps will move as separate entities in the direction of the arc. The closer the hair is nearer the scalp, the straighter it

appears. The wet clumps then start to thin out, and become separated near the ends, which is caused by water dripping off it. Once I establish the hair's form it becomes easier to paint.



Putting your research together to come up with a rough form will serve as a guide and help you finish the painting.

Question

I'm having trouble coming up with original hair styles for my figures. Help!

Janice d'Arcy, US

Answer

Naiha replies



The best way to approach fun hairstyles is to paint silhouettes. These silhouettes are a great way to develop new and crazy hair styles! This is because they give you a certain freedom when it comes to painting. Nothing's defined at this stage and your brain can simply detect patterns that you can reinforce as you paint.

I start off by drawing a random squiggle, which is essentially a single solid colour to which I can add to or reduce, depending on what I want. Then I start cutting away at it to establish where the face will be. Once this is done I move on to adding some lighter solid colours to create some negative space in the hair. These usually turn into bands and hair ornamentation further down the face. At this point I experiment with a lot of options until I'm happy with

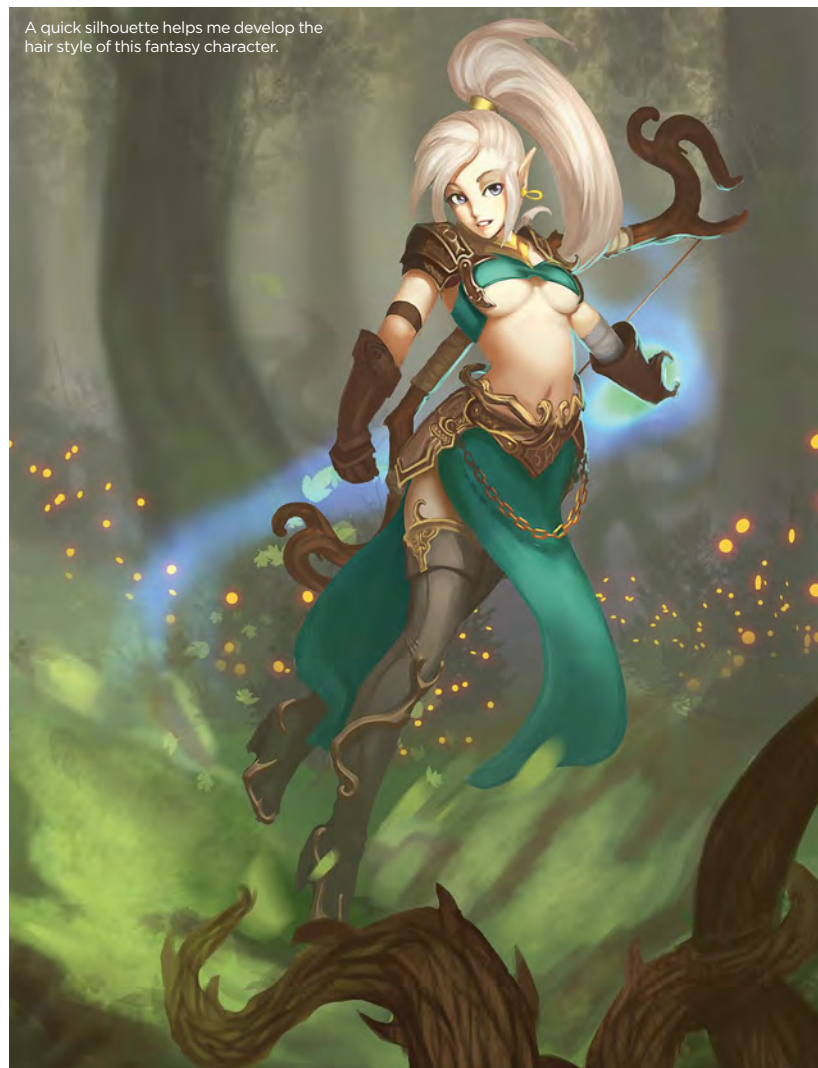


These silhouette experiments generate creative options for adjusting hair around the head.

what I want. This is a flexible method that enables me to convert the hairstyles to suit any theme I want to go with.

It's always helpful to have a folder where you can store all the cool hairstyles you come across online. This not only gives you a lot of information on how hair styles works, but can also inspire you when inspiration is temporarily lacking.

A quick silhouette helps me develop the hair style of this fantasy character.



Question

How can I tell if the values in my image are balanced?

Auriel Hardwick, England



Here I can see that my image is slightly heavy on the darks. The skin tones could be lighter, but generally I'm on the right track!

Answer

Dave replies



The coherence of your value organisation and structure can often make or break your image. Here's a quick yet effective technique that you can use in Photoshop to give you a good sense of how your values are working together (I was taught this by artist Euan MacTavish).

Open your image in Photoshop and convert it to four simple levels of greyscale: black, white and two medium shades. If your value structure is sound then the image should still be recognisable. If the value range is too narrow, you'll see large parts of the image blend together. This can help you identify the areas that need to be lightened or darkened, which will give your image more clarity and impact.

Try this technique out on some of your favourite artists' work, and you'll gain deeper insight into one of the reasons those images are so appealing to you. Thinking about this structure will become second nature, and your work will soon feel stronger and more memorable to the viewer.



In Photoshop, set your image mode to Grayscale, then select Adjustments > Posterize and move the levels slider to 4.

Question

Please help me paint a person's head and their reflection in the mirror in the same painting

Liliana Blaszczyk, Poland



Answer

Damian replies



Painting a portrait through the veil of a mirror adds its own set of specific technical requirements to an illustration,

beyond that of painting a compelling or attractive face. It also requires the painter to be able to find parallels that relate the subject to its reflection.

Often the art work I see addressing portraiture in reflection will depict a shot where the reflection acts as the actual portrait, and the subject is viewed from behind, usually over the shoulder. This is because the easiest way to get a portrait from a mirror that's perpendicular to the subject's glance is to create it from behind. However, by researching the subject I discover that by offsetting the angle of the mirror it's possible to include more of the subject's profile into the piece, while retaining the intended portrait. This act of tilting the mirror gives me more elements than provided by a 'back of the head' shot to unify the relationship between the subject and reflection.

My approach is to match key anatomy points between the profile and the reflected portrait. I'm mindful that proportions determining the 'likeness' are uniform across the portrait and profile, such as the distance from the eye-line to the bottom of the nose, and from that to the bottom of the chin. With the portrait in parallel, I use reference lines to match the portrait's anatomical landmarks to the profile and correct any discrepancies using Photoshop's Transformation tools.



By depicting the character at an angle in the mirror, I can reveal more of her profile to the viewer.

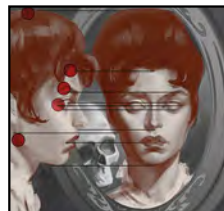
Step-by-step: Portraiture in reflection

1 Start simple, but descriptive. I begin with a modified oval, then indicate the placement for the eyes, nose and edge of the face, running a line down the cheek to the corner of the mouth. I establish a clear



shadow and light side. Then I boost the relationship of the symmetrical details across the face, such as the corners of the eyes, nostrils, lips and brow.

2 My next step is to use reference lines to find the inconsistencies between the portrait and profile. Here I found inaccuracies in the placement of the eye, hairline and jaw. I shift the discrepant



features with Photoshop's Smudge tool, as well as its Transformation, Warp and Puppet Warp tools, which can be found in the Edit menu.

3 I mirror tones and hues from the profile to the reflection, and back again, ensuring that if I paint something in one, it's also reflected in the other. Painting elements that distance the reflection, such



as distortion along the bevel, dust and scratches, and an overall desaturation and cooling of things in the mirror completes the illusion.

Artist's secret

USE MULTIPLY FOR FLESH TONES
Glazing a warm red with a multiply layer into the darker shadow's recesses and along the shadow border is a great way to add life to your flesh tones.

**NEXT MONTH: PAINT A GLASS FACE | CHOOSING ALIEN TEXTURES | DEPICT DUST CORRECTLY
DESIGN METAL AND LEATHER ARMOUR | PATTERNED METAL | LANTERN LIGHT AND MORE!**

VEXED

Originally created for a magazine cover by Dorje Bellbrook, here a Fireteam take on a Vex Minotaur.





MAPPING YOUR DESTINY

Destiny's colossal status is equalled only by its size. We speak to the art director and key concept artists on creating the biggest game of the next ten years



Everything about Destiny is huge. From the ambitious in-game world that melds massively multiplayer online environments with role-playing game dynamics, to the heavy-handed headlines of fortunes invested and recouped, developers Bungie want it to eclipse the company's previous billion dollar-making franchise, Halo.

And by all accounts it should, with Bungie setting aside the next decade to explore and expand Destiny's universe. For now the game is set 700 years in the future, in the Last Safe City on Earth. It's some time after a cataclysmic event ended a golden age of space colonising, made

possible by The Traveler, a white spherical, extraterrestrial gateway. A beleaguered humanity is gearing up to reclaim its planetary outposts and abandoned technologies over maps that reach two kilometres in size. It's a storyline that lends itself to oodles of cool art.

That art is a bubbling gumbo of cultural cues, of fictional and remembered histories. For a big, blistering AAA game, the developers have produced a visual space with the potential to subtly (and not so



subtly) engage the player. It may be loud and fast, but art director Chris Barrett and his team definitely didn't make the game dumb. ➡

REEVER TROOP

Rumours that the game cost \$500 million to make were followed by estimates of it taking \$500 million in its first 24 hours.



CHANGE UP

Some areas are open for Fireteams to explore, while in others you can play against the AI to your heart's content.



REEF QUEEN

Artist Jamie Jones painted this character, who's the queen of the Reef, which is one of the few settlements outside of the city.

■ ■ Our team looked at a wide range of artists for inspiration, both for subject matter as well as technique ■ ■

➔ “We’re always trying to imbue these places with all kinds of interesting questions, and a lot of them we won’t answer,” says Chris. “How did those cars get there? Why are they there? Where were they going? You have to think like you’re a viewer [in front of] a painting. That’s more powerful than us being explicit about what something is and why. Those kinds of moments raise questions about the world that we can potentially pay off five years from now, when you revisit that space. Planting those seeds, that’s really exciting for us.”

Lead concept artist Jesse van Dijk loved



dropping those visual breadcrumbs around his art. “What the influence of specific cultures is in the world of Destiny is an



interesting question,” he says, “because if you pay attention to detail you’ll stumble across references. In the Tower you’ll find signage isn’t uniformly in English – because this really is the Last Safe City on Earth, which obviously isn’t just populated by English-speaking individuals.” As far as which modern, real countries played a part in Destiny’s past, that’s up to you to fill in the blanks.

Name any civilisation, past and present, and chances are you’ll see its residue somewhere in the concept art. But what’s stopping this approach from tipping into chaos? “There’s a constant balancing act between the need for a unified approach to all art, and offering as much variety within that approach,” says Jesse. That’s ultimately up to the art director, Chris. It’s often impossible to fully grasp the entire picture,



ACTION!

The team created images to get a sense of what the action should feel like visually. Above, Kekai Kotaki paints a Warlock fighting The Hive.



SPACE TRAVEL

Initial gameplay will take you to Earth, Venus and Mars.



SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

Art director Chris Barrett gets to the white spherical heart of Bungie's latest blockbuster



There are plenty of futuristic sci-fi meets fantasy versions of modern day human technologies to be found in Destiny. However, perhaps the primary one – certainly the most visually arresting – is The Traveler, an alien sphere that hovers over the Last Safe City on Earth. The finished design was a long time coming.

"We knew we needed this hub where players would go to after each adventure," says art director Chris Barrett. "But we went back and forth. 'Is it a station in space? Is it orbiting around Earth? Is it just a regular city?'"

Ultimately, Chris decided to let the visuals tell the story, "and that visual, when you put the thing that's not supposed to be there against the familiar, it just kind of clicks. Bringing the familiar and the unfamiliar together is such a big part of the entire game; you're visiting the ruins of humanity, these places you've never been before."



THE TRAVELER

The sphere of alien origin serves as the player's gateway between missions.

TEAM BUNGIE

The development team at Bungie work out the kinks discovered during the beta tests, months before Destiny's release.



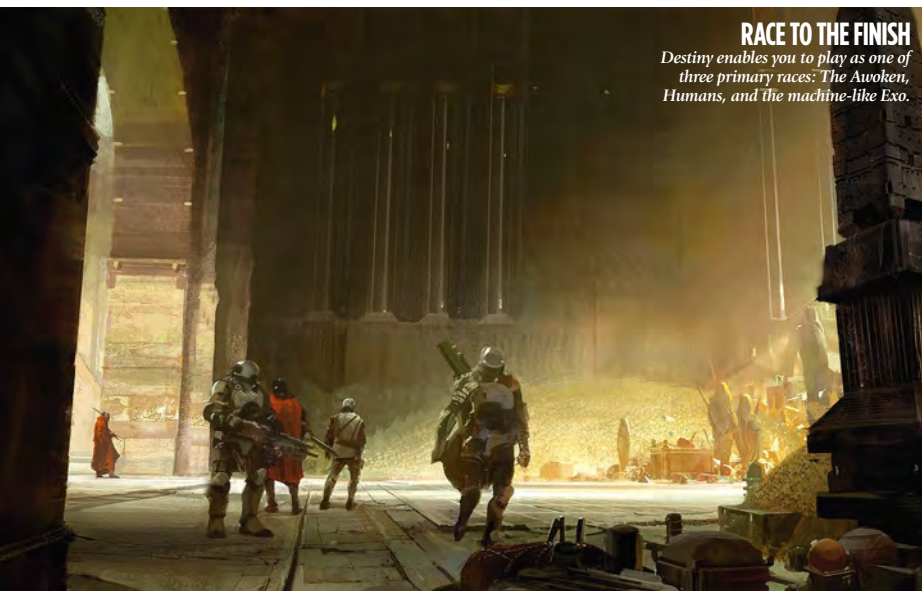
which is why it's so important to have good and holistic art direction."

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Once you've got your bearings on Earth circa 2700 AD, some of it may seem familiar. Hovering over the Last Safe City on Earth – a planet under attack by alien races (The Fallen from above, The Hive from below) – is The Traveler. In the game it's an alien sphere that enabled humanity

to thrive, colonising space. It then hovered over Earth, providing shelter for human's last stronghold to flourish. As a visual, it's a transparent homage to the classic sci-fi art of the 1970s.

"Our team looked at a wide range of artists for inspiration, both for subject matter as well as technique," says Jesse, "and John Harris and John Berkey are titans of old-school illustration, and their work heavily informed the feeling we wanted ➡



RACE TO THE FINISH

Destiny enables you to play as one of three primary races: The Awoken, Humans, and the machine-like Exo.

■ I love the diversity of Destiny's world, because it means that no two assignments were alike ■

➔ to get from many of our mood concept pieces."

Going underground, "Polish artist Zdzisław Beksiński strongly influenced the look of the Hive environments. American architect Lebbeus Woods was an inspiration when we were creating the Vex palette," Jesse says of the aliens attempting to take over human colonies on Mars and Venus. "Craig Mullins is, of course, an all-time favourite, instructive for his daring use of stroke, noise, and composition, and his astounding body of work is always useful when you need inspiration."

Jamie Jones started on the game in 2008, when the art department was a four-person team. "I spent two years working on it exclusively and then



contributed intermittently until its release," he says. "I love the diversity of Destiny's world, because it meant that no two assignments were alike. I'm happy when there's variety and room to experiment. Destiny offered both."

For this artist, whose early concepts of The Traveler became some of the most iconic when released last year, it was a matter of luck who influenced him the most in his artistic choices. "The biggest influence for me was Ralph McQuarrie. Around the time I was starting on Destiny, a gigantic book of his work had just been released. I wore out the binding on my copy, I looked through it so much."

Flicking through the artwork of Destiny is both a new and familiar experience – like walking the halls of an art gallery in the future. A barrage ➔

6 STEPS TO DESTINY

Destiny is the biggest gaming event of the year. Here are six other influential titles and artists the game is proud to wear on its sleeve



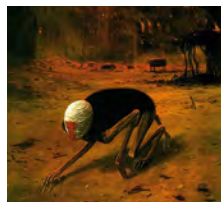
HALO

We wouldn't be talking about Destiny at all if Bungie hadn't created this billion-dollar-making franchise in 2001. Bungie's original spawned the classic modern first-person shooter.



WORLD OF WARCRAFT

Destiny is a cocktail of game play styles, but this decade-old massively multiplayer online paved the way for huge games where thousands of gamers can play together.



ZDZISŁAW BEKSIŃSKI

Looking at this Polish artist's 'Utopian art', the influence on Destiny may not be apparent. But once you've met The Hive, an underground alien race, you'll see his visions staring right back at you.



JOHN HARRIS

The 1970s art of this UK-based sci-fi artist heavily influenced lead concept artist Jesse van Dijk when he was working on some of the environments for the game.



BORDERLANDS

Initial reviews of Destiny have often name-checked this 'loot 'em up' from Gearbox Software as a possible source of game and art inspiration.



DARK SOULS

Destiny gamers may notice dark areas that respawn you at the most recent checkpoint, similar to those in Dark Souls – not to mention enigmatic design choices when it comes to explaining mechanics.



HANGING OUT

Lead concept artist Jesse worked on Destiny from his first day at Bungie – actually, from his job interview!





BIG BALLS

The Traveler is a key narrative device, but also a homage to British 70s artist John Harris.

➔ of sunrise-bleached medieval battlements, snow-covered steampunk war crafts, a rusting space colony embedded in a tropical jungle. "Bringing the familiar and the unfamiliar together is such a big part of the entire game," Chris says. "You're visiting the ruins of humanity, these places you've never been before. There's this buried city on Mars. It's human, but it's on Mars. That juxtaposition is key."

ROOM TO MOVE

Destiny might be related to Halo, but creatively it's another breed. "One of the things that happened with Halo is that, when we started developing the storyline, we started locking ourselves into certain stories that we had to tell," says Chris. "We'd have an idea and it was always like, 'That doesn't go with what we did in the last game.'"

There were no such concerns this time round. "This time, we wanted to create a world where lots of stories were possible,



SUIT UP

With a mixture of fantasy and mythical sci-fi, you'll play as particularly well dressed Guardians.

so that anything can happen. We can pull something from another dimension and have it floating over Brazil, or we could open up a strange warp gate in space and have aliens pouring through," he continues. If a crazy idea came with killer concepts, chances are it'd make the game. "Nebular clouds around the moon?

impossible ideas at him. Then he would do the actual hard work of implementing them in the game," says Jesse.

STARTING OUT

Jesse saw the first rough concepts for Destiny in his job interview for Bungie, and pretty much every piece of art after that.

■ ■ We wanted to create a world where lots of stories were possible, so that anything can happen ■ ■

That's okay in our universe, and we don't necessarily have to explain why."

The vast, modular structure of Destiny lent itself to artists following impulses they might otherwise have dismissed. "With lead world artist Marke Pedersen, I spent a lot of time working on the specifics of the Tower, mostly throwing random,



"I joined Bungie in 2011, and worked on Destiny from my first day. When I joined there was an outline of the general art direction, established through incredible mood paintings by people like Jaime Jones and Dorje Bellbrook. Their artworks were so powerful; I clearly remember the profound impact they had on me when I first saw them."

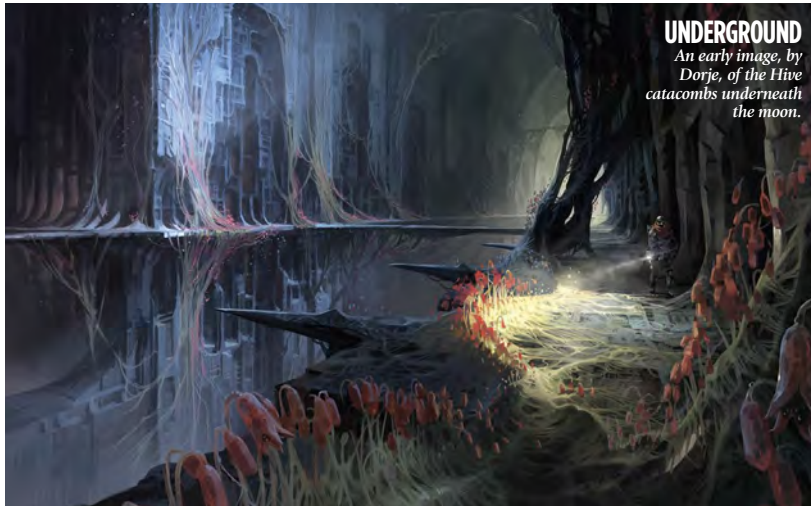
When Jesse is at the other end of such high praise, he's quick to deflect. "It's humbling to receive praise, but it's important not to lose track of why we did those pieces in the first place: to make a good game. Just creating pretty pictures is not why we do what we do. The feedback the artists are looking forward to is the player's response. Concept art, like every component, can make all the other components better."

Around the game's September release, professional artist Edward F Howard put out a fan piece of Destiny art online (see No.1 Fan, right), "just for fun – and for a job if Bungie wants to hire me." With Destiny 2 touted for a 2016 release, and expansions for the next decade, he may very well get his wish. ●

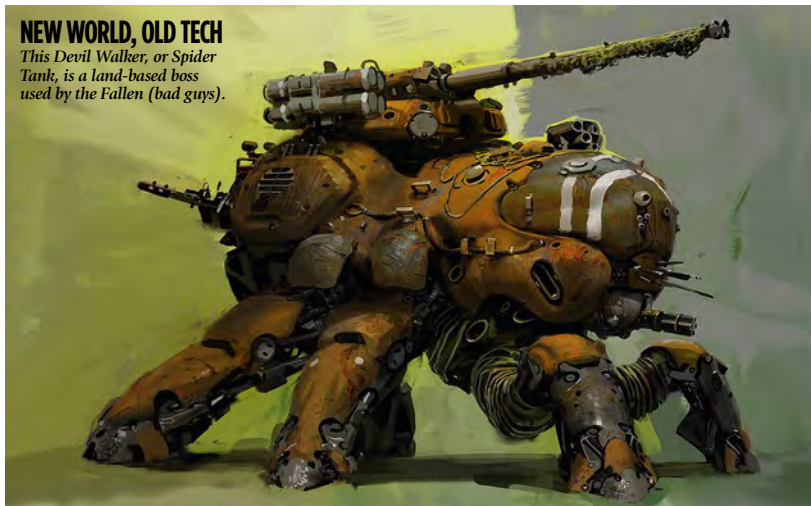


TAKE IT EASY

Another dynamic painting by Jamie Jones of one of the many enemies you'll face.



UNDERGROUND
An early image, by Dorje, of the Hive catacombs underneath the moon.



NEW WORLD, OLD TECH
This Devil Walker, or Spider Tank, is a land-based boss used by the Fallen (bad guys).



RICH HISTORY
Dorje painted this image of Vex ruins littering the surface of Venus.

NO. 1 FAN

Edward F Howard is hoping to work on the sequel to Destiny before the decade is through...



"Bungie is a company I've admired for years. I bought my first Bungie game in 1994: Pathways into Darkness. I was hooked. I was equally impressed with its work on the Marathon series and the Halo franchise. To me, Bungie's ability to innovate has always been its greatest asset. I think Destiny is another amazing game with a great concept... I love that it's a game that will continue to evolve with new missions and challenges.

"I think Destiny is a beautiful game, from the armour designs to the ever-changing weather, clouds and sky, to the landscapes; it's always fun to see where Bungie's imagination is going to take you next.

"I'd love to be a part of its organisation. My first exposure to Bungie's concept work were the amazing pieces produced by digital artist Craig Mullins, for Marathon. Since then I've always thought how fantastic it would be to work for the company and am constantly toying around with my own concept designs.

"I've never worked on the game side of the industry; however, the creativity from companies like Bungie has always made it incredibly alluring."



FAN ART

Edward F Howard painted this as a calling card to Bungie's art team.

Artist **PROFILE**

Peter Mohrbacher

COUNTRY: US



Peter is an independent illustrator and concept artist living in the Chicago area. Primarily self-taught, he's been part of the game industry for around seven years. These days he works primarily on self-owned projects in addition to an online mentoring program aimed at helping aspiring artists establish themselves.
www.vandalhigh.com

Peter Mohrbacher

It took a bit of time for Peter to 'learn' how to doodle, but once he did, the results were impressive

SKYHOOK

"The original sketch for my airborne character. It was a random doodle done at a drink and draw."

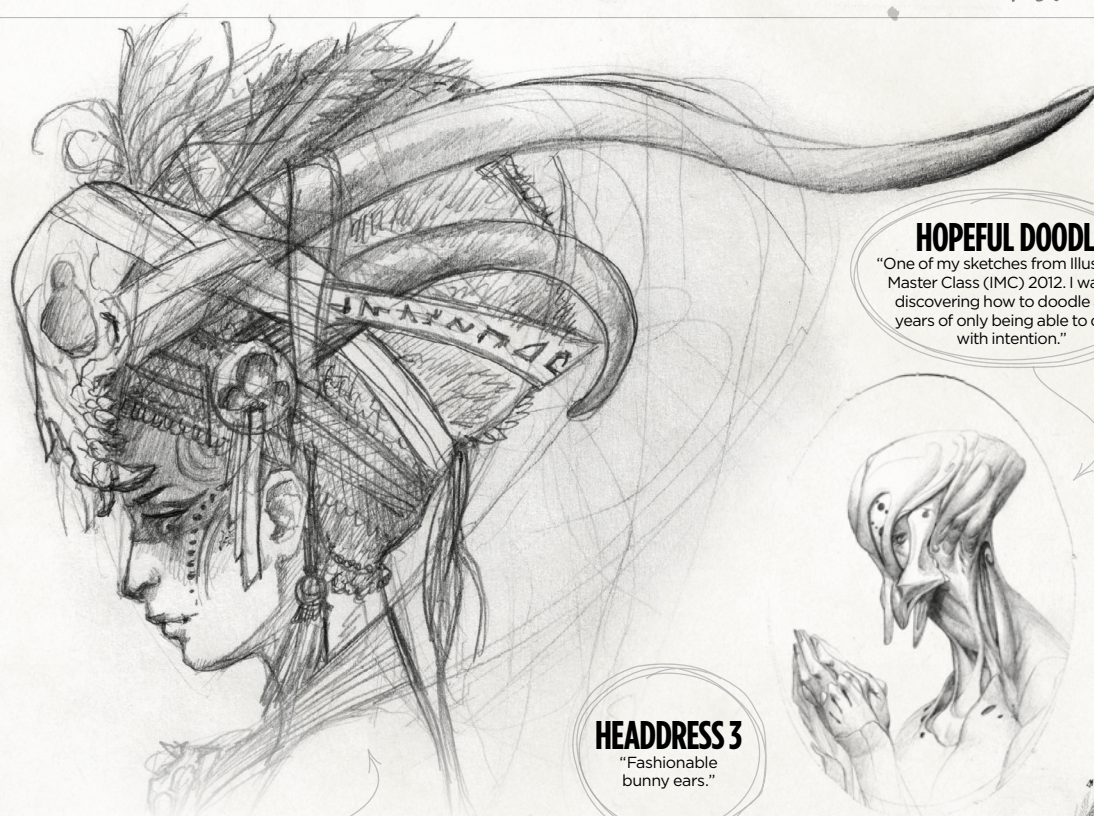
STRANGER

"Took a few days off in Valencia while I was out there for a Magic event."

PRIDE DOODLE

"I drew this after looking at a bunch of Wesley Burt drawings."

"All airports exist next to each other in some super boring bubble of space."

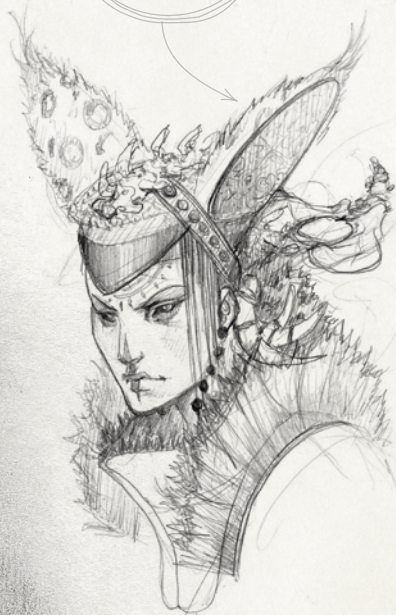


HEADDRESS 2

"Part of a series of headdresses I was designing for the cancelled World of Darkness MMO."

HEADDRESS 3

"Fashionable bunny ears."



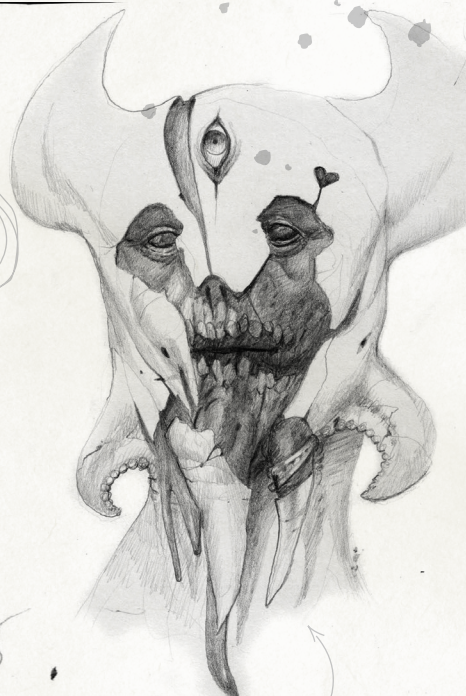
FEAR DOODLE

"I drew this at Burning Man while inside a geodesic dome with a bunch of Wizards of the Coast employees."



HOPEFUL DOODLE

"One of my sketches from Illustration Master Class (IMC) 2012. I was just discovering how to doodle after years of only being able to draw with intention."

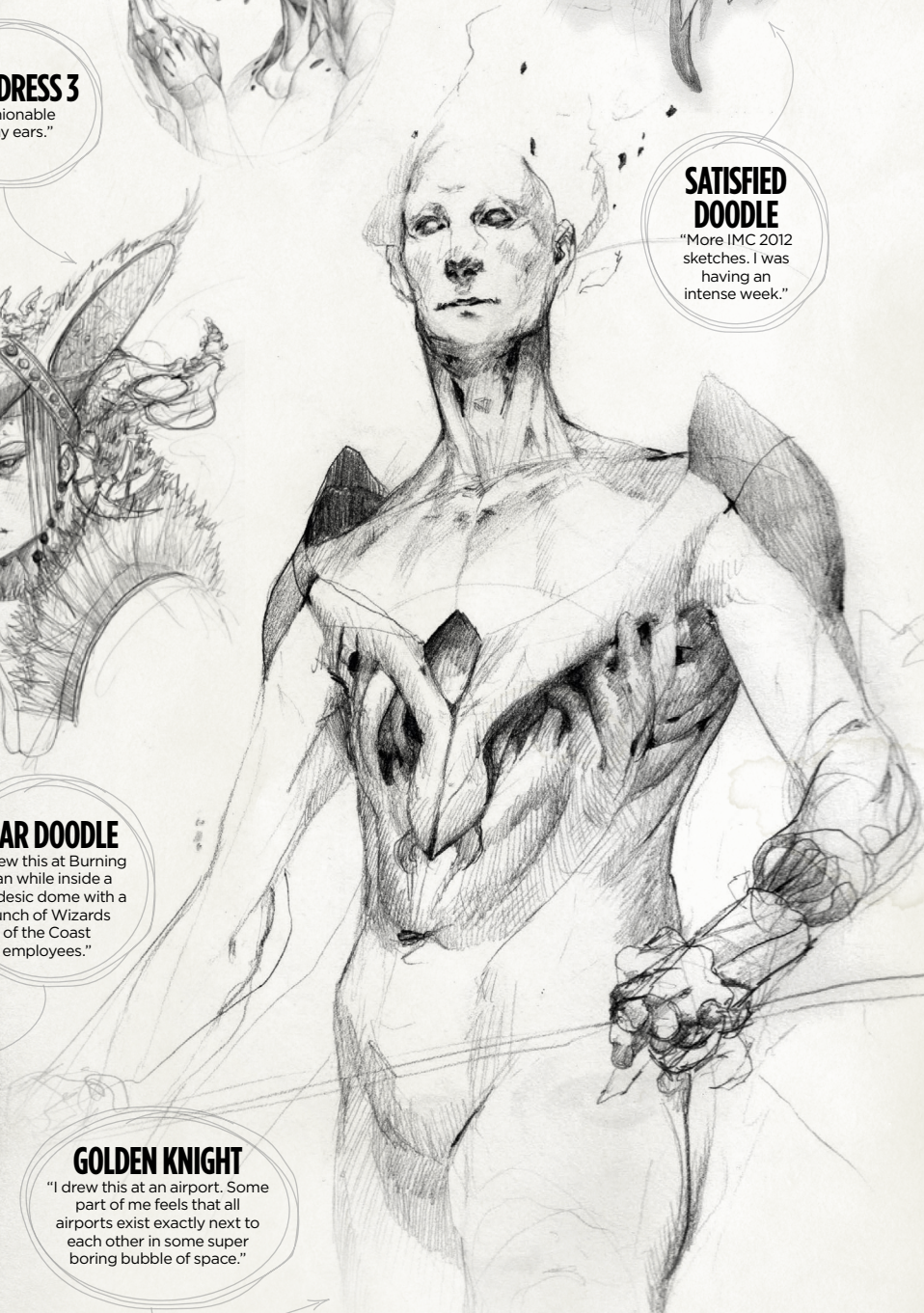


SATISFIED DOODLE

"More IMC 2012 sketches. I was having an intense week."

GOLDEN KNIGHT

"I drew this at an airport. Some part of me feels that all airports exist exactly next to each other in some super boring bubble of space."



Sketchbook



HEADRESS

"A World of Darkness concept that never went anywhere."



NED STARK

"My take on the Game of Thrones character looks nothing like Sean Bean."

ACOLYTE

"Her powers of faith are causing the crystal to levitate. Probably."



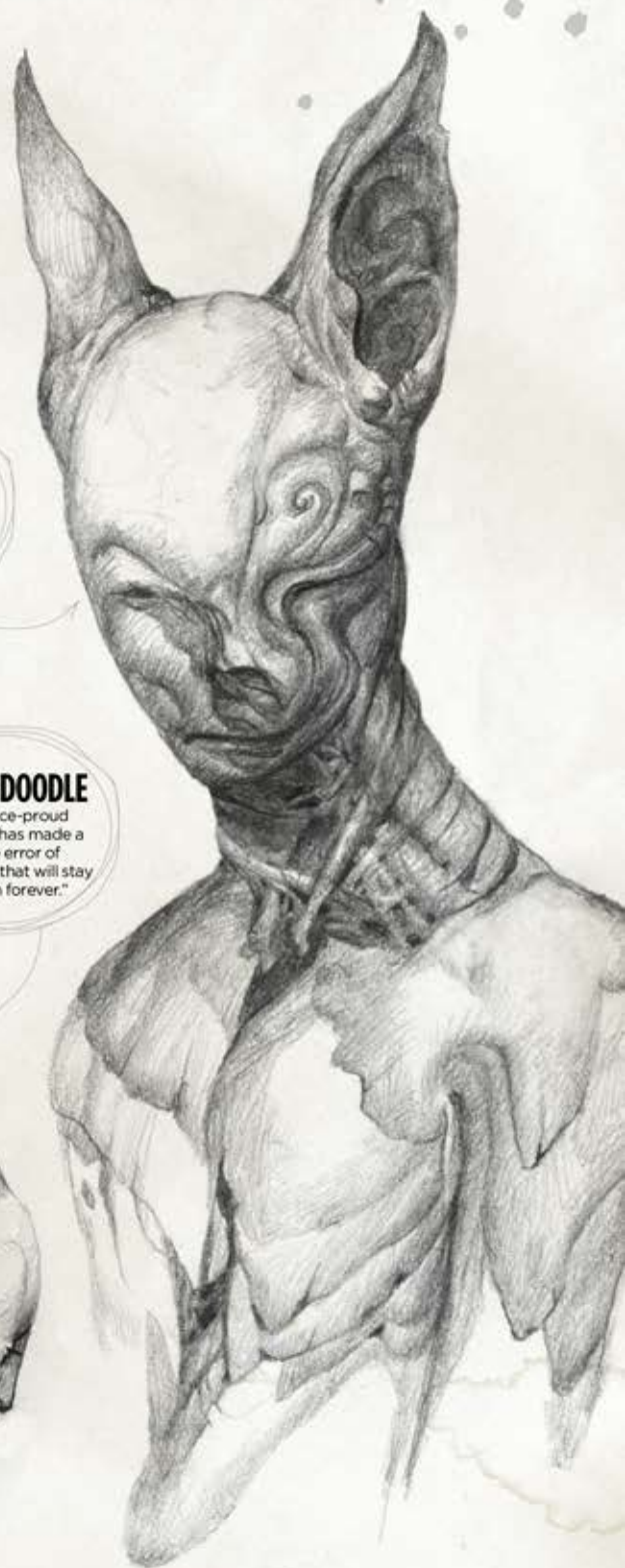
STRESS DOODLE

"Why stress out when you can sketch it out?"



DARKO

"I challenged myself to draw at a local coffee shop every week. I think I only went twice. This was the first time."



SHAME DOODLE

"This once-proud character has made a terrible error of judgement that will stay with him forever."



SHYNESS DOODLE

"Spectrum Live 1 didn't have a lot of attendees, so I had plenty of time to doodle."



ANXIETY DOODLE

"Given the chance, this chap would like to hide away from the world."

"I challenged myself to draw at a local coffee shop every week. I only went twice"

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NEXT MONTH'S SKETCHBOOK: WESLEY BURT

STUDIO PROFILE

CARBINE STUDIOS

How a group of artists left one of the world's biggest games companies to carve out a wild future with cowboys in space

Blizzard – the company behind World of Warcraft, Diablo III and StarCraft – was recently voted one of the places people in the games industry would most like to work, with only Valve and working for one's self ranking above it. It's not hard to see why being employed by the company is so desirable: it makes some of the most popular and best-loved games in the world, while maintaining a benevolent attitude towards its employees. So why on earth would anyone want to leave?

"Blizzard is a great place to work," says

Matt MocarSKI, Carbine Studios' development director, and a former senior artist on World of Warcraft. ➔



LOCATION: California, US
PROJECTS: WildStar
OTHER PROJECTS: Not yet...
WEB: www.carbinestudios.com



Carbine asks prospective artists to take a test to ensure they understand WildStar's distinctive art style.

“Blizzard is a great place to work, but in terms of developing new IPs the opportunities are limited”

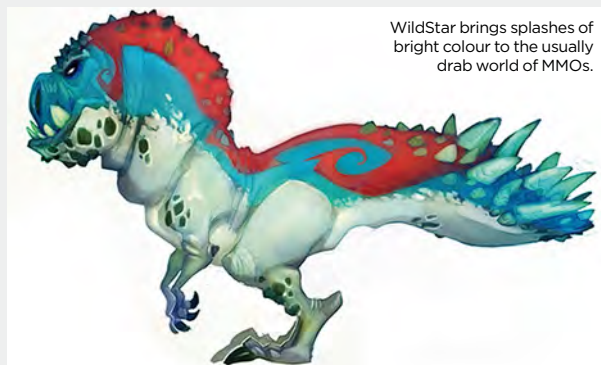
There's a human being hiding under all that garb, believe it or not.



The design of this government building tells you a lot about the game's themes.



WildStar brings splashes of bright colour to the usually drab world of MMOs.



“We wanted to make an MMO that felt like an action game. Everyone got excited by a space Western, so we ran with it”

➔ “But in terms of developing new IPs [intellectual properties] the opportunities are limited.” This stubborn approach is at once Blizzard’s biggest selling point and its Achilles heel. Its loyal fanbase is guaranteed to lap up the latest Diablo sequel, or recent World of Warcraft spin-off Hearthstone, but it hasn’t created an entirely new intellectual property since 1998’s Starcraft.

It’s not much of a surprise, then, that numerous companies have sprouted from the seeds sown by ex-Blizzard employees.

“A lot of devs from World of Warcraft were talking about doing their own thing,” says Matt. “There were multiple groups. One group became [Firefall developer] Red5. The other became Carbine.”

CREATIVE CONTROL

A deal with publisher NCSOFT was struck, with the agreement that Carbine would have creative control over a new MMO – an idea that chimed with people working on World of Warcraft. “I think that after the

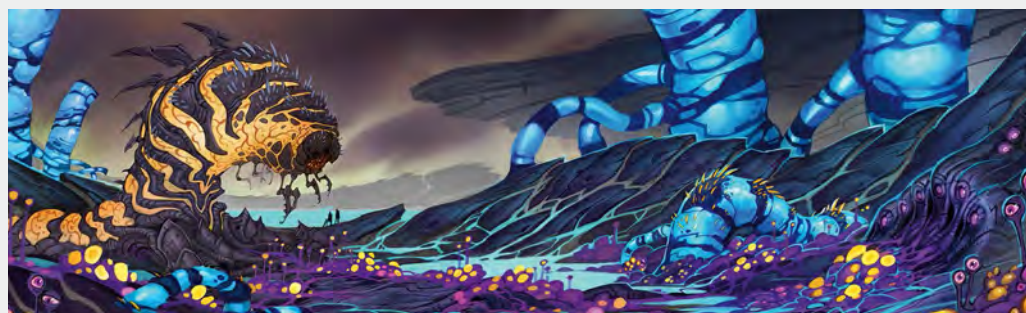
A slightly bonkers design for a four-eyed snail-roast chicken-chariot hybrid.

A chunky and colourful visual design applies to both characters and the environments.

first year something like 80 per cent of the staff were former Blizzard Employees,” Matt continues.

That new MMO would become WildStar, first announced by Carbine at Gamescom in 2011. Unsurprisingly, Carbine decided to remove itself from World of Warcraft’s high-fantasy tropes as much as they could while developing the game. “We wanted to make an MMO that felt like an action game,” says Matt. “Everyone got excited by a space Western, so we ran with it. We started to inject the characters with more personality and we hadn’t seen a lot of that in the MMO space genre. It added this playfulness.”

The game’s art style was a big part of selling the new MMO to its prospective audience, which is notoriously fickle at the best of times. “Trying to appeal to everyone usually results in a watered-down look that doesn’t stand out in the crowded market,” says Eric Henze, the game’s art director and another ➔





The imposing size of the Granok race is nicely represented in this piece of artwork.

JEFF MERGHART

The industry veteran tells us how to be a successful artist

What did you do before your started working for Carbine?

Besides a lot less driving, I was a senior concept artist and senior animator for Sony in San Diego. Before that I started as an animator on *An American Tail* [an animated film released in 1986]. I did various character design, animation and storyboard and layout jobs, working both full time and freelance, until I landed at SCEA (Sony Computer Entertainment of America) and we made *The Mark of Kri* for the PlayStation 2. Since then I've launched nine more games.

Who do you count as key influences on your work?

The earliest memory I have of something being imprinted on my mind was seeing Disney's *The Jungle Book*. Ever since then I've been fascinated and obsessed with character animation and character design, specifically the work of Milt Kahl, John Lounsbery, Marc Davis, Ken Anderson and Bill Peet, as well as Ed Benedict. I was also greatly influenced by European comic artist Albert Uderzo of *Astérix* and *Obelix* fame, and Norman Rockwell. And thanks to the internet I've discovered so many other great influences it's ridiculous!

What's your best tip for artists who want to get into the industry?

Be flexible artistically. If you want to be a visual development artist, in any field, then you need to be able to convey many different ideas visually. If something's not working you've got to try something else. Successful artists are able to adapt to different mediums, styles and genres. As visual development artists, if we want to stay vital then we need to be able to evolve while keeping our work appealing and convincing.

How do you find living and working in Aliso Viejo?

I only work here – I still live in San Diego (and south San Diego at that) and commute every day. Not trying to sound kiss-assy or fake, but doing what I do with the team I work with at Carbine Studios is worth the 160-plus mile drive. That's three to five hours driving a day. My car isn't very happy and I wish I was closer to my wife and kids, but it's not so bad. I just keep the gas tank and iPod loaded.

What are you working on next?

Right now I've just got *WildStar* and its potential incarnations in my sights, and it's going to look absolutely awesome!



Jeff's blog features his artistic inspirations and mix of personal and professional work. You can also buy one of his amazing sketchbooks here.

www.jeffmerghart.blogspot.com

WILD TALES

WildStar's senior concept artist reveals one of the MMO's in-game publications

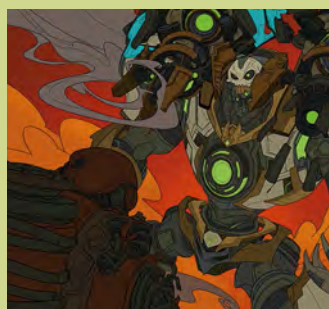


One of WildStar's coolest added extras are the Tales from Beyond the Fringe. Scattered throughout the game, these pulp fiction comic books add a meta-narrative to the game's proceedings, and the quest to collect them all is impulsive and addictive. The game's artists also spent a lot of time creating the surprisingly detailed covers, as senior concept artist Johnson Truong explains...



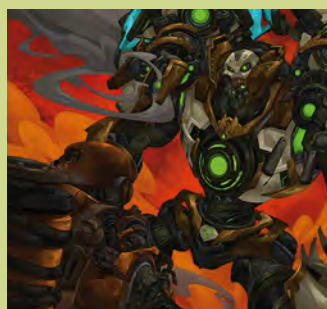
Roughing it

I roughly sketch my cover idea. Once I'm happy with it, I overlay the sketch with a new layer and draw a clean line drawing using Photoshop's default Round brush with Shape Dynamics turned on.



Colour blocks

I block in the local colour of each figure. I ensure the foreground character is a darker value than the other character. This provides basic separation of the fore, middle and background planes.



Lighting

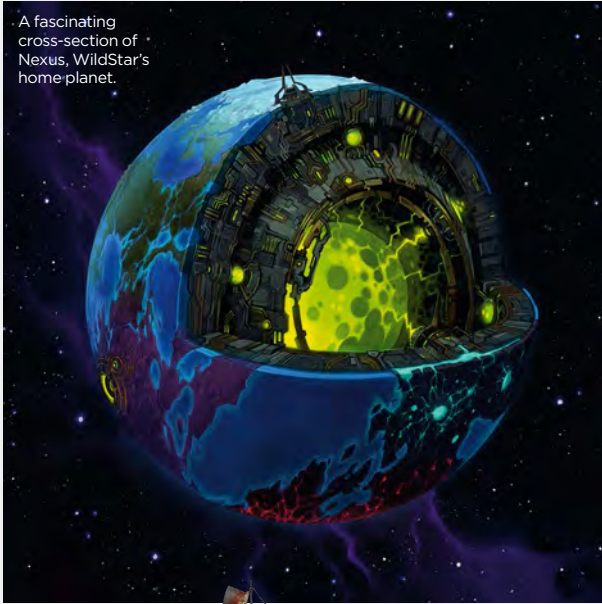
I'm keeping a general light source from above that affects both the characters and the smoke. I paint with a simple dry brush to create more grit and character in the piece, which suits the story.



Final steps

From the glowing elements I paint rim lighting on both characters, then airbrush fog on the bottom to put a little distance between the two characters. Finally, I warm the image using Color Balance.

A fascinating cross-section of Nexus, WildStar's home planet.



former Blizzard employee. "The fact that our art style has some rabid fans and some equally loud haters means that we've done a good job sticking to our guns and making a game that we as developers enjoy."

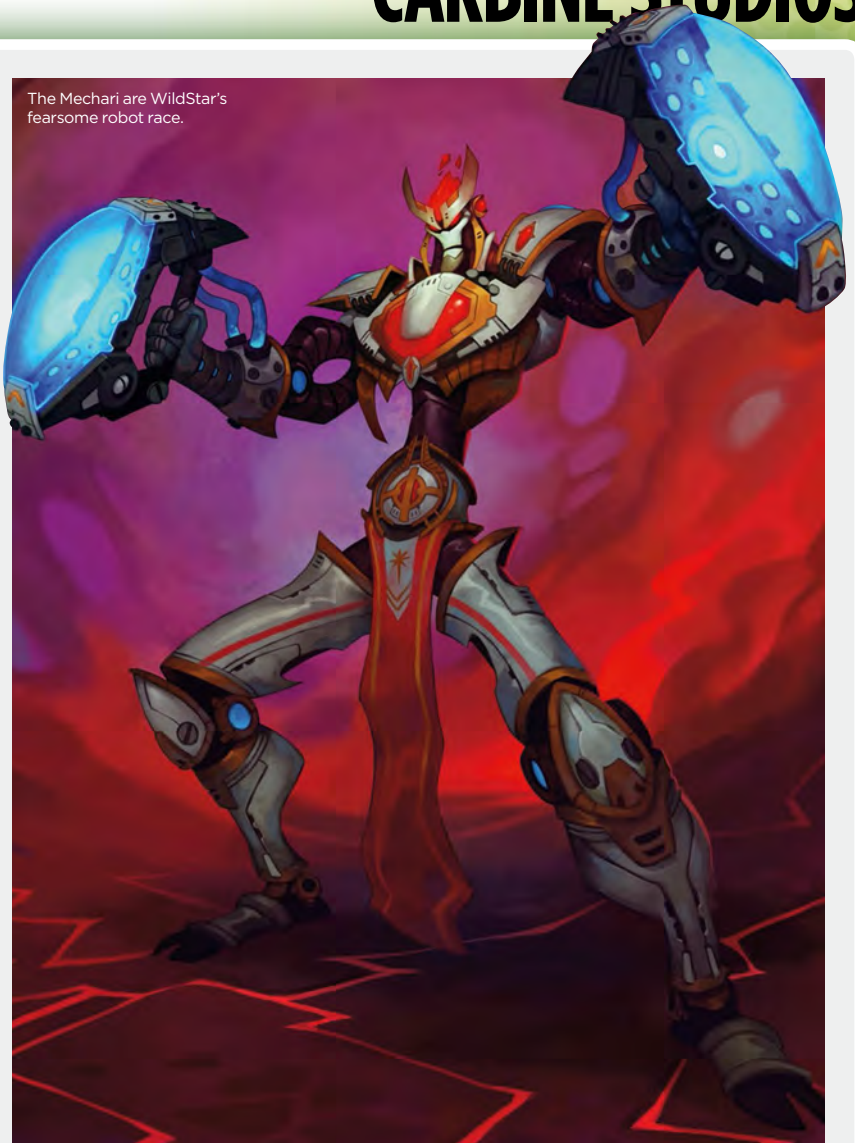
A FUN-FILLED UNIVERSE

Even a brief glimpse of WildStar's characters, creatures and props tells you almost everything you need to know about the game: it's cartoony, fun and bright in a way which recalls Firefly or Guardians of the Galaxy. "We try hard to make our creatures and characters feel relatable and believable inside of the high-personality universe we've created," says Eric. "The

These Marauders' ships blend organic shapes with military designs.

“We try hard to make our creatures and characters feel relatable and believable inside the universe we’ve created”

The Mechari are WildStar's fearsome robot race.

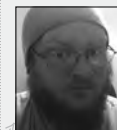


One of WildStar's more serene settings.

small details on the characters and props we choose to surround them with tell a story about how those characters live and who they are."

While Carbine has certainly nailed a consistent look and feel for the game, it's the first year or so that can truly make or break an MMO – and the team's got its work cut out. "We're releasing a ton of content over the next year," says Matt. "We want to keep players engaged and offer them a top-notch playing experience. In addition to new content and features, a good portion of our team is fixing issues with the game. Maybe down the road we'll start talking about

something new, but for now the whole team is dedicated to making WildStar the best MMO out there."



There's a certain thrill for the artists who have worked on the game. "The first time you see a concept modelled and in-game is still exciting to me," says Daniel Stultz, a concept artist who seems to be one of the few people at Carbine who's never set foot in Blizzard's offices. "I've watched a lot of people play our game on Twitch, and getting to see people run around in environments, or use a weapon I helped create is awesome." ●

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Advice from the world's best artists

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Photoshop CREATE GAME CHARACTER ART

Vinod Rams, senior concept artist at Motiga, shows you how to design a video game character the Gigantic way

Artist PROFILE

Vinod Rams
COUNTRY: US



Vinod is a concept artist and illustrator with 15 years' experience in publishing and video games. He "geeks out" about anything and everything character- and creature-related. www.vinodrams.com

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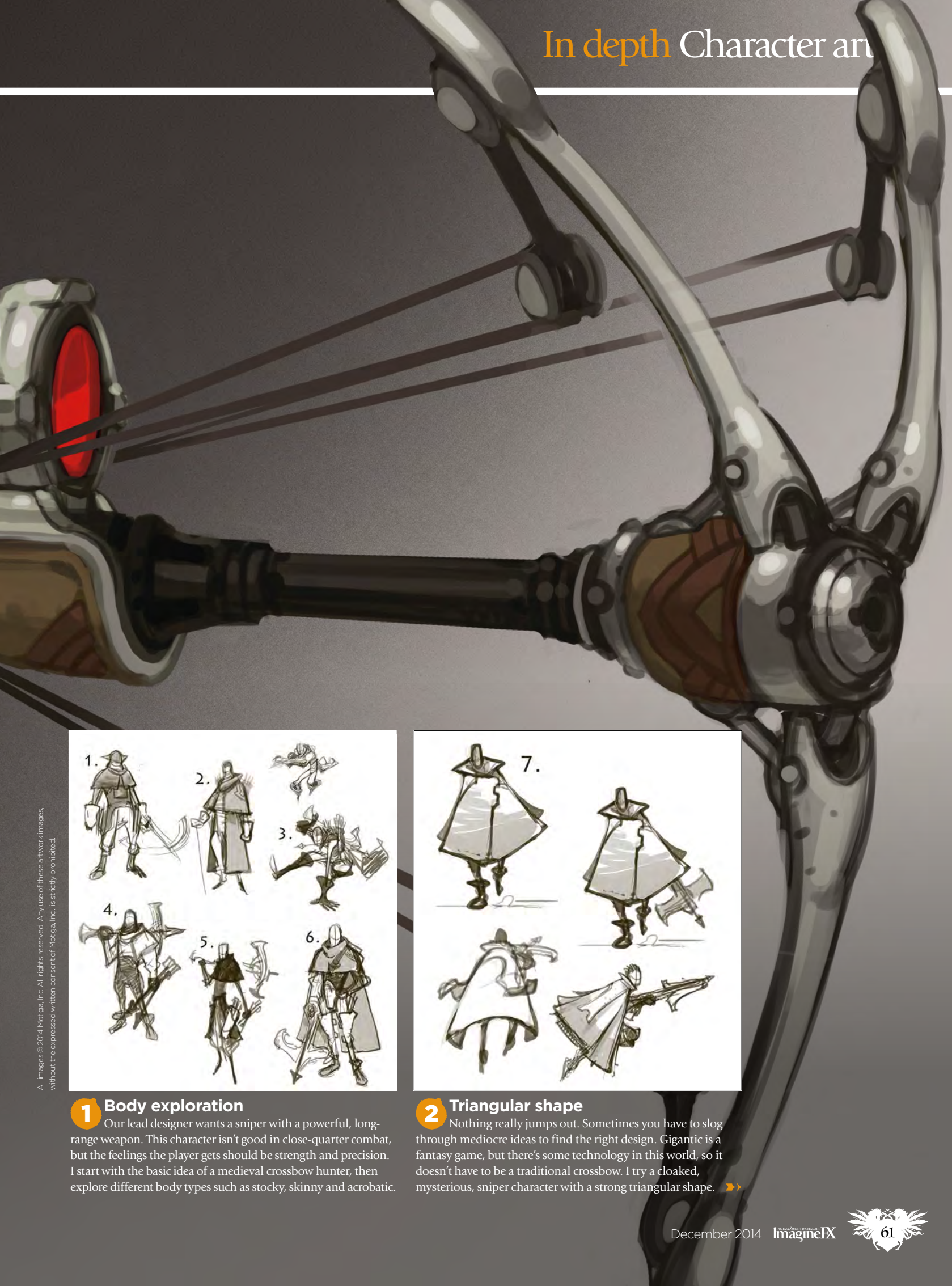
Gigantic's character design pillars are three simple words: bold, focused and charming. We want our player characters to be aspirational, memorable – but also fit a gameplay requirement. Out-of-the-box thinking combined with classic archetypes help make our heroes interesting and aspirational, yet relatable.

Designing a hero for Gigantic is a different process than I've worked with

at other studios. Character and creature design is both a singular and team effort at Motiga. I'll take you through the collaborative way that we approach character design on Gigantic, which is a team-based combat game. Because there's a team of five, every character can just be about one specific thing or idea.

Imani is first and foremost a strong, capable, elite sniper. Everything in her design should reinforce that idea. I'll take

you through all the steps I go through: thumbnails, roughs, missteps and perfect hits! I'll also go into how collaborating with the rest of the art team helps to create a character that fulfills the role of game while having personality, and storytelling elements within the design. Concept design isn't done in a void just to look pretty – it should first and foremost serve the purpose for the game. Form follows function on Gigantic.

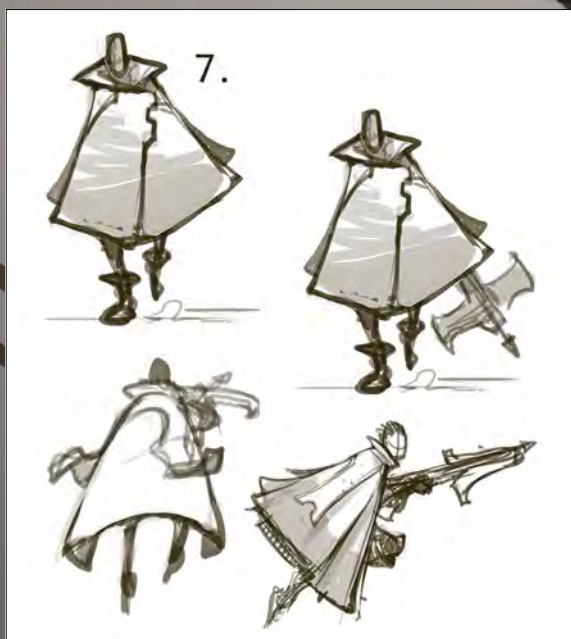


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1 Body exploration

Our lead designer wants a sniper with a powerful, long-range weapon. This character isn't good in close-quarter combat, but the feelings the player gets should be strength and precision. I start with the basic idea of a medieval crossbow hunter, then explore different body types such as stocky, skinny and acrobatic.



2 Triangular shape

Nothing really jumps out. Sometimes you have to slog through mediocre ideas to find the right design. Gigantic is a fantasy game, but there's some technology in this world, so it doesn't have to be a traditional crossbow. I try a cloaked, mysterious, sniper character with a strong triangular shape. ➡➡

PRO SECRETS

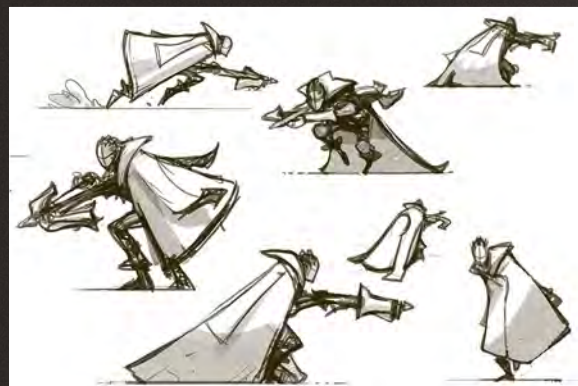
Regularly tone your drawings

If you want to make your rough design drawings more readable, it's a good idea to quickly lay in a few tones to indicate lighting and form. It's a simple way to snuff out any questions about your drawings. If you're drawing at 100 per cent Opacity, quickly knock back the Opacity to 30 per cent by hitting 3 on the number pad, lay in some shadows and values, then hit 0 to go back to 100 per cent.



3 We got one!

The other strong ideas from this round of conceiving include an evil mercenary with an oversized crossbow, and a confident elite gunner with a huge coat. I also start some face studies to gain a sense of who this character is. I post the art on our internal Wiki and see what the rest of the team thinks. Everyone really likes the cloaked guy from step two.



4 Action poses

Gigantic's heroes are all about what they do and I want this sniper guy to move in dramatic ways. These sketches help communicate to the team what could be possible. I consider keeping the character cloaked until he pulls out his weapon, or imply how sneaky and low to the ground he is by letting his cape drape around him. His cloak is a neutral colour for camouflage.



5 Another shot

The team like him, but the animators say that after working on Tyto the Swift they don't want to deal with another complicated cape. I draw up another page of poncho-wearing military types and select poses that show flair and character. I post roughs, but he doesn't resonate with anyone. I agree they're a bit dry and similar to an existing character, Roland.



6 It's a bull's-eye!

I go back and do another page. This time I dump all the previous roughs out of my brain. I start afresh, not afraid of exploring some weirder, oddball ideas. Strange silhouettes and wild costumes such as ghillie suits are the results. Version two immediately catches everyone's attention. A female sniper with a huge fur collar: she has style, character and is just plain fun!



7 Explore facial expressions

I'm happy that a direction had finally been decided on, because now I get to dig in and explore the character. I start with the face. I want her to be confident and strong. The eye-patch sketch immediately resonates with everyone. That's the character. The interesting hair, smug expression and eye-patch give everyone more than enough information to understand what she's all about.



8 Proportions and readability

Now that I have a good sense of her character, I go back to her body. Her puffy collar is her first read, her huge crossbow a close second. Here I explore different ratios of legs to torso to collar – and try different shapes for the collar. She looks best with a short torso and long legs, which give her a stable, strong feeling. I also explore motion concepts as I work out her details.



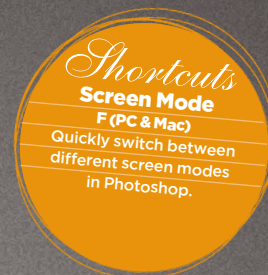
9 Motion concepts and poses

One thing I almost always try to do when I'm designing a character is to sketch out what I like to call "motion concepts". These are simple gestural drawings that explore how the character moves and carries themselves. Often these rough drawings can tell you more about the character than a fully rendered concept painting.



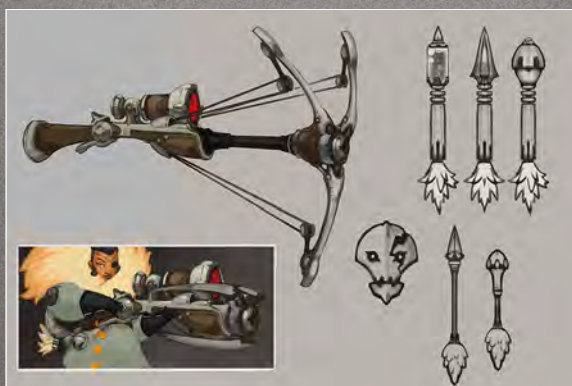
10 Complete the concept

For the final concept I pick a strong pose. Her weapon is so long, I want to give the impression that she's putting all her weight on her right hip. This will help sell the fact she can hold her exaggerated weapon. I research WWI and WWII military uniforms and develop a muted colour scheme. I want her light-coloured collar to be her highest area of contrast.



11 A well-dressed lady

At the midpoint I take a break and play around with collar shapes and hairstyles. The team like the sense of motion collar number six has, but we decide having larger fur tufts would translate better to 3D. For Imani's default hair we keep the flat-topped poof. Hairstyles tell a lot about a character, so keeping her do as a military-style flat top works well.



12 Crossbow meets umbrella

Because Gigantic is a fighting game, Imani's method of combat is important. Her three-stringed crossbow was conceived as a rough sketch, but now it's time for details. I want rounded, chunky technology and for it to pop open like an umbrella. Making her scope huge and oversized helps sell the outlandish design. As I design it I chat with the modeller and animators.

PRO SECRETS

Check your values

Doing this during the painting process is the best way to make sure you're aware of how your design reads. You can't just pull all the saturation out of the image with an adjustment layer; this won't show the true values. You have to turn the file into a greyscale image. The best way to do this for your workflow is to have a blank page open, set it to Grayscale mode, and then from time to time you should flatten and copy/paste the design into that page to check your values.



13 Shapes and motifs

It's important to pick a motif you can repeat throughout the design and with stylisation the motif can also be applied to the character's anatomy. Imani's primary shape motif is a puffy, tapered oval. You can see this echoed in her body, arms, legs, face shape, hair and weapons, even in her hands, fingers and feet. There isn't a hard, sharp or right-angle shape on her.



14 Apply final details

When I finalise the concept I make sure our design pillars of bold, focused and charming are all there. Bold: she's got that eye-catching fur collar and odd, exaggerated gun. Focused: everything about her design reinforces that she's strong, capable and elite. Charming: her pose, costume and hairstyle say superiority and style. No weak, knock-kneed poses or vapid expressions here! When you see her hopefully you say, "Oh yeah, she'll get the job done with a smirk on her face." ●



Photoshop

DESIGN A SHIP FOR A SPACE GAME



Artist PROFILE

Josh Attack
COUNTRY: England



Josh, aka
Badger, is the
concept artist
at Develop

Award-
winning Space Ape
Games in London. He
likes freshly brewed
coffee and pangolins.
www.badgertracks.net

**GET YOUR
RESOURCES**
See page 6 now!

Josh Attack takes you through his techniques for conceptualizing a spaceship, as part of the video game pipeline process

Designing spaceships for games is a fun experience. If you're interested in science, exploration and the cold, haunting darkness of space then you should definitely give it a try.

I've designed a variety of spaceships, most recently for Frontier Development's new *Elite: Dangerous* game. I hope that my advice will inspire you to give it a try. If you already draw a lot of spaceships then perhaps there's something here that you haven't considered before.

Designing for games is a different challenge compared to illustrating a scene. You have to consider all distances and directions of view, as well as ensuring that your design fits into the game's world.

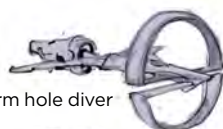
In many science fiction games the spaceship is a character in itself, and this is a good way to approach the topic. Is your ship brand spanking new, or a beaten-up bucket of bolts? Are the owners rich or poor? How about adding unique elements that suggest it's a semi-sentient craft, or a plant-based bioship? Perhaps

the ship's been created from a hollowed-out asteroid to look inconspicuous? Thinking of your spaceship design in the same way as your characters will help you to create an interesting ship that people can relate to and want to fly in the game.

In this workshop I'm going to start with a fairly straightforward brief, but don't be afraid to push the boat out. Sci-fi in films and TV have iconic ships that look very different from each other. Just think of the *Enterprise*, the *Galactica*, the *X-wing*... the list goes on!



Basic design concept



Worm hole diver



Experimental warp engine



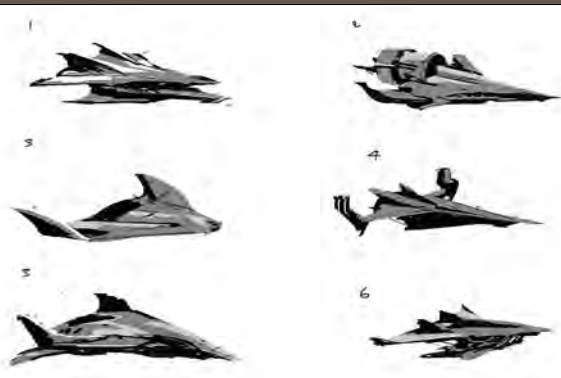
Oversized ion engine version



Rugged live in version



Solar non atmospheric version



1 Answering the brief's requirements

I'm going to design a fast scout ship that's able to defend itself and rescue colonists under threat. Defining your universe's technology will shape your design. As an example, what's the propulsion technology? A fast, fuel-intensive method would mean less space for supplies. Perhaps it's achieved with a specific drive that takes up more room than conventional engines?

2 Thumbnailing designs

In a game that features a range of ships, it's crucial that they have distinctive silhouettes. Think about basic design language: for example, rounded edges can be seen as safe shapes, so use them for passenger craft. My thumbnails fit the brief because their flat undersides would be able to handle planetary re-entry. The wings convey manoeuvrability and speed. ➡➡

PRO SECRETS

Environmental lighting

A handy trick often used in car design that will help you make your work look more plausible is to add some of the ground's colour into the underside of your spaceship and some of the sky's colour to the top. Typically, this would be brown and blue, respectively. But you can use whatever you think fits your spaceship and its surroundings.

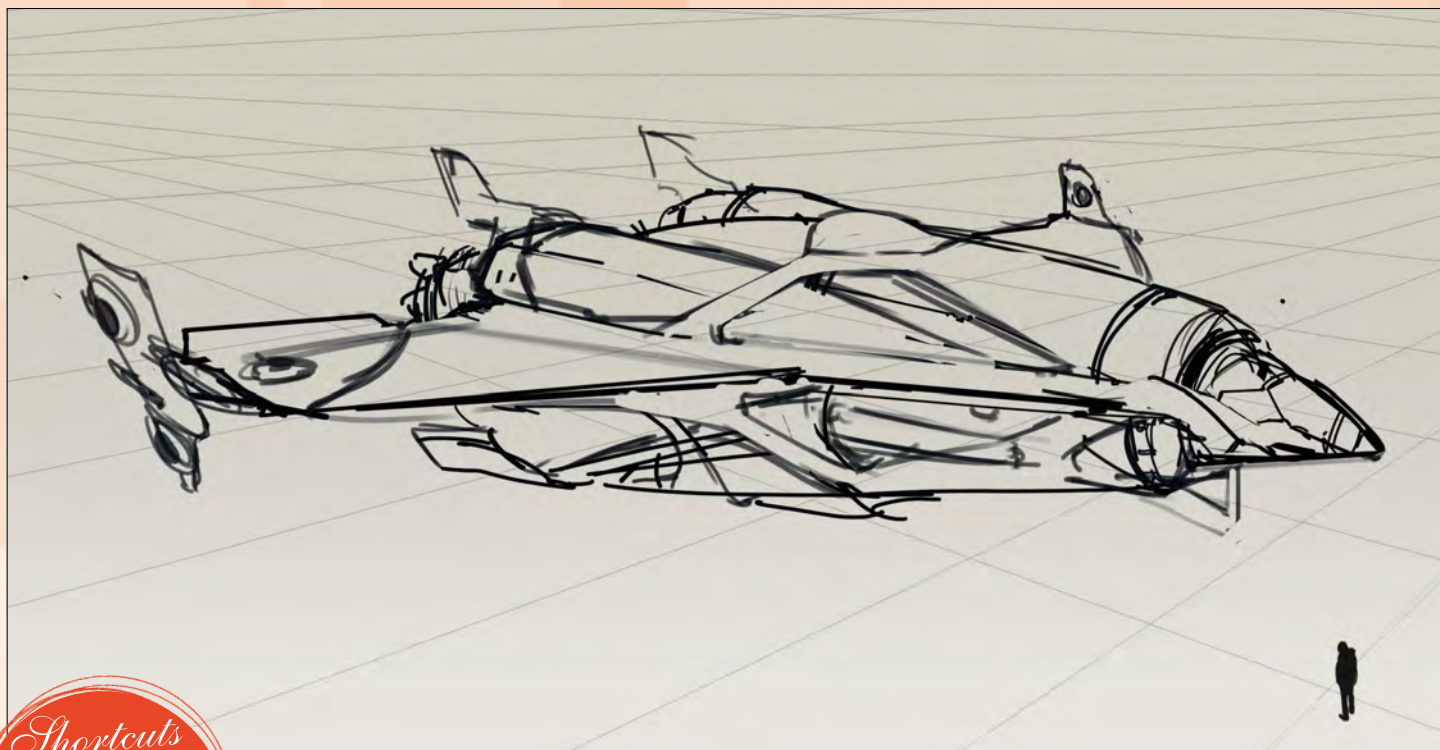


3 Mood check

Once I've completed the thumbnails I take my favourite ones further. I drop them quickly into more appropriate surroundings, such as this simple space dock. This helps give me a better sense of what my ships will look like in-game. If I already have some other ships created for this game then I sit them alongside each other for comparison.

4 Refining thumbnails

At this stage I can usually tell what areas I want to focus on. I work up my favoured thumbnails, taking them in slightly different directions and seeing if I like the results. I still try and keep the amount of tones I use to a minimum. The spaceship is going to be under a lot of lighting conditions in-game, so I want it to work in all of them, and making sure it reads like this helps.



Shortcuts

Desaturate

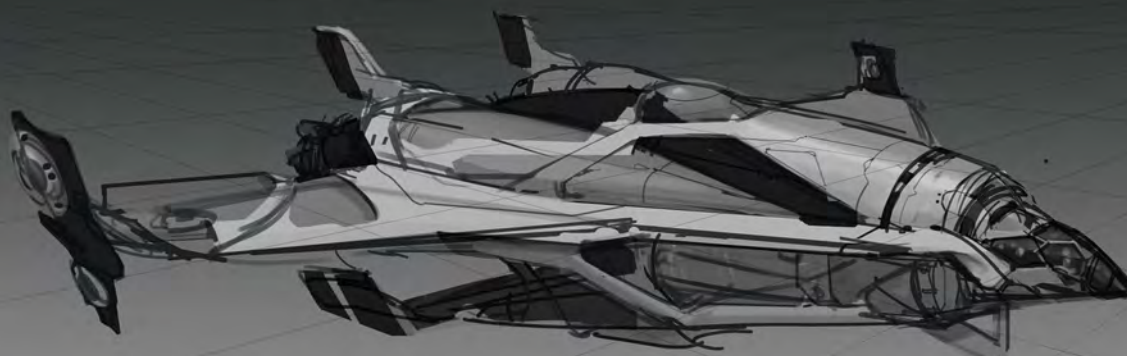
Ctrl+Shift+U (PC)

Cmd+Shift+U (Mac)

Duplicate your canvas and then press this key combination to check the contrast.

5 Developing clean line work

I chose this thumbnail because it fits the brief. I imagine that the flat underside is able to enter the atmosphere safely, the wings indicate that this is a highly manoeuvrable craft, while its chunky body alludes to a cargo-based role. I feel the ship is at once small enough to lead on to some bigger ships later in the game, while big enough to feature offensive weaponry. I take the design into a new document and start sketching out the line work. Doing this on a perspective grid avoids problems later on. I throw in a figure to give the 3D modellers an idea of scale.



6 Tone block-in

Next I block out the basic tones of the ship. For gaming purposes you have to think about what areas of the bodywork might be customisable. This could be either as simple as adding a decal, or something more complex such as applying a new colour scheme as chosen by the player.



7 Colouring the craft

My view of colour is that it's an important tool for breaking up the panels and giving more life to my design. If your game has faction colours then now's a good time to add them in – it'll help establish its place in your gaming universe.



8 Refining your design

Don't be afraid to question your design. Here I've experimented with the wing shapes, and left myself little visual prompts. Your design will keep throwing up new challenges to resolve, so keep looking at real-life reference. ➡

PRO SECRETS

Perspective pointers

Draw your perspective line with the Path tools, so you don't have to worry about going off canvas. First select the Path tool. Then select the Line tool and set the Pixel Width to 1. Create a new path and draw your horizontal line with vanishing points at either end. You can also create a new layer and use the Stroke Path tool to bring these perspective lines to the canvas. Don't forget that you can choose the colour of your stroke paths – it will simulate whichever brush and colour you've picked.



Shortcuts
Clipping masks
 Alt+Ctrl+G (PC)
 Alt+Cmd+G (Mac)
 Paint over your base layer without breaking your silhouette.

9 Landing gear

The ship is going to need to land, and the crew will probably want the ability to get out! I add doors and landing gear to my ship design; I don't want to have to squeeze these elements in after someone has started to turn my drawing into a 3D model.

10 Weathering design elements

I add weathering to my designs. This helps sell what the ship's life is like, enriches the game world and gives everything a sense of depth. Think about how a ship could experience wear and tear. An asteroid miner might be covered in dust and small dents. A long-distance goods freighter could feature mismatched body panels, with worn paint work around cargo doors.

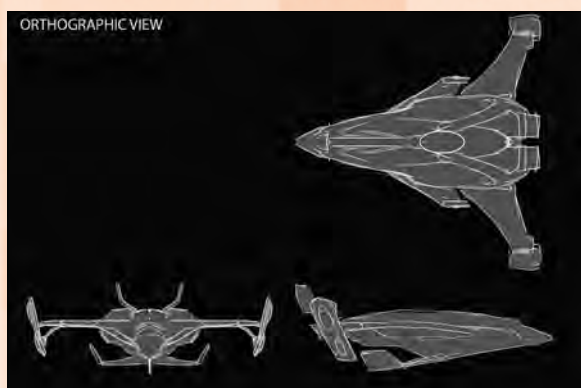


11 A modular approach

I ensure that the craft I've designed will fit in with the current game mechanics by dropping in some weaponry that I've quickly conceived. Modular parts such as better engines or a long-distance scanner gives the players something to aim for, in terms of in-game achievements.

12 Clear labelling

In the games industry a group of artists further down the production pipeline will be turning your concept into a three-dimensional model. For the best translation of your idea – and to avoid lots of emails going back and forth – you should explain your art as much as possible, as simply and clearly as possible. Here I label where I think moving and modular parts should go.



13 Produce an orthographic sketch

Once I'm happy with the beauty render, I'll send this to the 3D modellers along with an orthographic sketch of the basic forms from a variety of angles. However good your concept might seem from one angle, someone else's view of it might be completely different. Your sleek spaceship might come back looking like a duck. We've all been there!



14 Submit your work for approval

The spaceship design is complete so it's time to submit it to my art director. I almost forgot the most important piece of advice: have fun! If you aren't having fun then you aren't fully interested, and if you aren't fully interested then you aren't going to produce your best work. ●

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: RUST01

I use this brush for creating areas where the ship has had its paint scratched off.

BRISTLE_2_BRUSH 1

Ideal for depicting areas where coolant or oils might have leaked.

SOFT ROUND 60 1

I use this for most of my rendering, I find it keeps my design readable.

HARDSQUARE

This brush is used for thumbnailing, blocking in and refining edges.

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Detailing and adding greebles

I use alpha channels quite often to load detailed selections from photos and paint through them like a mask. This enables me to paint loosely, but I can keep a nice, crisp detailed group of shapes to break up perfect edges. I do this on natural surfaces as well as on industrial surfaces.

Hundreds of small ships

After doing a line drawing to work out the design, I quickly model one ship with low geometry. Once the big shapes are in place, I paint over it to produce colour variations, texture and small glowing parts. I duplicate these throughout the image and paint the lighting on them to reflect the looming shadows in the scene.

Background planet

Shortly after I begin the piece, I loosely paint the desaturated pink glow of the distant planet. Knowing I want to have reflective icy shapes on the surface, I lasso these out and then paint reflections with a soft brush. Switching to my smaller ellipse custom brush (see right), I add all the details.

Photoshop & Modo USE 3D TOOLS TO DESIGN A SCI-FI SCENE

Aaron Limonick shares his process for painting film and video environments

Like most of my pieces, this starts with a quick drawing on a napkin and sparks a much bigger idea. I've long been a huge fan of 70s and 80s sci-fi art, so naturally designing a huge fleet of spaceships is something of a fun challenge. The image isn't a commissioned piece, but rather for a live demonstration at Siggraph 2014 for The Foundry. I want to showcase some of the great features Modo has to offer in 3D, as well as show how well it can

integrate into my more illustrative painting process in Photoshop.

The more I work on it, the more I want to go further into the design of the piece. So I call it Armada, as a massive fleet of small ships fly in low orbit underneath a huge space station. The process enables me to loosely design, light and render elements of the fleet in 3D, and then tie it all together by painting over it. I aim to create a massive sense of scale and depth, while suggesting the presence of icy alien worlds in distant space.

Painting supporting objects

Using the accurate values from the render, I paint new objects into the scene and make them match the lighting. I start with simple shapes and add detail as I go, sampling from the values of lit parts of the ship nearby. This way I have fun with shapes and I have a reference for the lighting.

Artist PROFILE

Aaron Limonick
COUNTRY: US



Aaron is a games and film concept artist who works for

Sony at Naughty Dog, on projects such as The Last of Us.
www.limonick.com



GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 6 now!

How I create...

MAJESTIC SCI-FI IMAGERY



1 3D block-in

I quickly block-in my scene in Modo, using polygon modelling and prototypes I've made previously. With this method I can rough out a representation of my messy napkin sketch and experiment with how to light my scene. Then I can render and begin painting on top. Now I can paint in more form and lighting using the accuracy of the model as an example.



2 The environment

After moving into Photoshop, the first thing I do is paint the environment that will frame the subject. I like to establish these values because the sky, or in this case outer space, will determine much of the values and ambient lighting affects the subject. I've already established the values of the main ship, so any changes to that will be minor in terms of value and will concern the details more than the broad value statement.



3 Adding details

At this point, I've decided on the most important large elements, so all that's left is to add character and life to the mothership. I need to paint textures and detail that give a sense of human scale on the surface of the ship. Otherwise, it'll be unclear how large it really is. I also decide to add hundreds of smaller ships flying below the giant ship, which gives the piece a sense of movement and life.



RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH:
ELLIPSE TEXTURE

I try to keep my brushes very simple, so that my painting isn't overly affected by them.



Photoshop

LIBERATE YOUR WORK PROCESS



Artist PROFILE

Thomas Scholes
COUNTRY: US



Thomas has worked for Microsoft, Disney and NCSoft, and

is now a freelance visual development and pre-production director on Ashen, an upcoming open-world RPG.

www.artofscholes.com



GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 6 now!

Thomas Scholes reveals how to make your workflow more efficient and the tricks he uses to boost creativity

Whether you're a hobbyist just painting for fun, or a full-time artist working to constant deadlines, it's crucial to develop a realistic painting process that produces the best results with as little wasted effort as possible. It makes sense to borrow from the successes of previous work and imagery – even more so when working on an independent commercial

project, where time, money and other resources might be limited.

With traditional mediums this process is often implemented in a linear manner: thumbnail, sketch, preliminary drawing, colour study, and finally the painting itself. The digital medium expands this existing equation. It also allows artists to apply a non-linear workflow that gives them the ability to build upon past

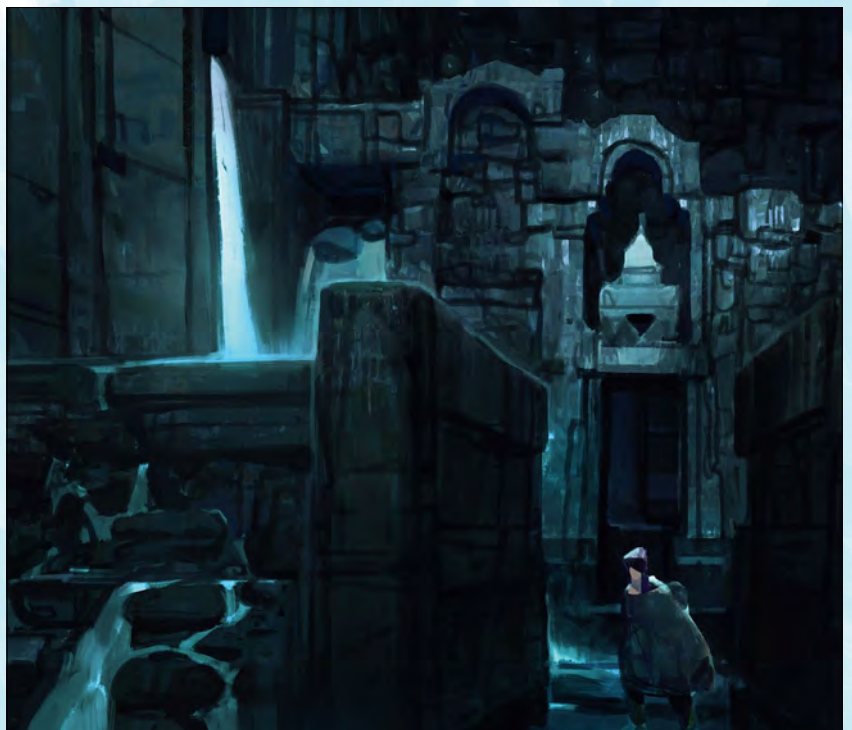
success and re-examine previous failure quickly and effectively.

I'm going to show you how all this is possible, using artwork from Ashen (www.ashen-game.com), an upcoming RPG that I've been busy working on, as an example. I'll discuss the process and methodology I most often use on the project, and hopefully you'll be able to adapt this into your own workflow.



1 The precursors

I start by reviewing some of the pre-existing assets I'll be combining. Much of the final decorative motifs were developed within the simple image above, and will be expanded upon in the new image. Ashen is a dying world, so its culture features life symbols in its architecture and costuming. We're going to borrow portions of the architectural iconography from this earlier and less-defined image (right). The ideas were there, but as the project continues we can weave them closer together until hopefully the audience can no longer see the gaps. ➡



PRO SECRETS

Failure

Failing is only a waste if you let it become so. Treat your work as research and it's easy to see that there's vital data contained in each image, whatever the outcome. Some trials teach you what will work, others teach you what won't. Chances are, the ratio may weigh heavier on failure, so remember to learn from it so that you'll succeed more often.



2 Recursion

To set the stage even further I'd like you to know that both of these images are they themselves direct products of past successes and iterative improvements. Sketches within sketches within sketches... it's a neverending work that's always ready to be taken to the next level.



Shortcuts

Flatten Visible to New Layer

Ctrl+Alt+Shift+E (PC)

Cmd+Alt+Shift+E (Mac)

Great for making large-scale changes to your art.



3 Treating art as science

At its most natural, my painting process is far more an act of exploration and discovery than one of statement and creation. I'm happiest when I treat my work as scientific research in the pursuit of questions and generally have much less success if I have the expectation of revealing concrete answers. As artists, though, we seem to be in too much of a hurry towards the destination or just as often have been hurried there by others, deadlines, or impending bills. Our lives are much richer when we tend to the journey and not the destination.



4 Suitable use of layer modes

I'm looking for interesting shapes that match the existing world. My key Photoshop tools are simple transforms as well as Lighten and Darken layer modes. I prefer these modes because they don't combine the pixels from each layer like Multiply, say, but instead override what you see with either the lightest or darkest pixel from either source. It results in a cleaner hybrid.



5 Weekly catch-up

I'm made aware during our weekly team meeting that our production artist, Leighton Milne (www.vivin.artstation.com), would be starting pre-visualisation and production on our in-game approach to water, and so I ensure that these images give the artist as much visual and technical inspiration as possible.



Shortcuts
New Layer
Ctrl+Alt+Shift+N (PC)
Cmd+Alt+Shift+N (Mac)
Pressing Alt to the default
new layer command
saves even more time
while painting.

6 Passive priming

I find that having a passive understanding of the team's immediate needs serves as a catalyst for much of my paintings, without sacrificing the artistic integrity necessary to produce the best quality of work. When pre-production is done in this manner, it's not only sustainable and invigorating, but it also readily handles both speculative and unforeseen challenges. In turn, it makes the production process all the more efficient and enjoyable.



7 Strengthen visual hierarchies

Now that the interest has been found and production objectives met, it's time to balance the rough composition and re-establish the spatial and visual hierarchies. These highlight what's most important to the concept and visual narrative, distract from the less-important areas, and provide a clear and enjoyable experience as the viewer interacts with your work.



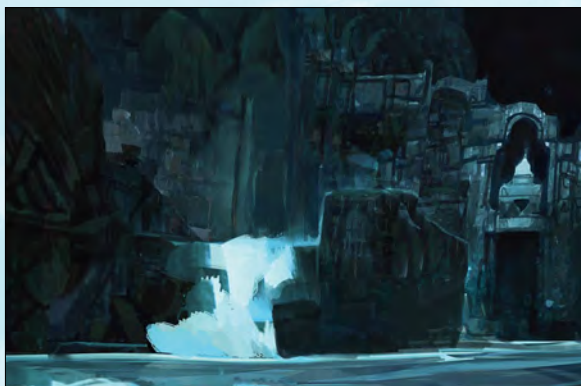
8 Audience avatar

Because the game's characters represent the player they need to be properly realised – there's no point skimping on their depiction just to claw back a few minutes of painting time. Having said this, my approach is appropriate to this project, and I encourage you to develop your own process that's a mixture of not only borrowed knowledge, but also of learned experience.

PRO SECRETS

Seasonal art

For me each day has its seasons: some tasks are better left to spring and others are done better in autumn. Summer comes in the middle and should be enjoyed and if at all possible, best spent out of doors. Winter comes at the end and should be a time for reflection and rest. Knowing how to optimise your workday is invaluable in this way.



9 Enter the editing room

Now the major patterns and relations in the image have been resolved, my role shifts from art director to editor. Though there are some minor structural changes, the bulk of the work will be spent pushing, pulling and camouflaging on an increasingly smaller scale until it's no longer realistic to continue.



10 Finished... for now

The image has gone about as far as I can take it, for its final purpose. But I do hope you'll keep an eye on my personal website for further iterations as well as the Ashen website to see how it'll be incorporated into the final product. I'd love to hear your thoughts and thanks for reading. ●

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SketchUp USING COLOUR AND SHADOWS IN 3D

Applying colour and shadows can be just as rewarding in 3D as it is in 2D. Get up to speed with **Mark Roosien's** help

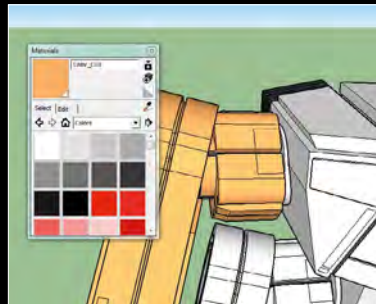


Applying basic colours and shadows to your three-dimensional SketchUp models is straightforward. By using the Paint Bucket tool, you'll be able to add colour in only a few mouse clicks. Adding and manipulating shadows is just as easy. If you haven't got SketchUp, you can download the free version SketchUp Make, at www.sketchup.com

In this month's Core Skills article, I'll apply colour and shadows to one of my four-armed construction mech designs. When you paint a complex model, you can either select entire components or you can choose to select individual surfaces as you see fit. Shadows are applied to the entire model in one go. Just follow the three steps below and you're in business!

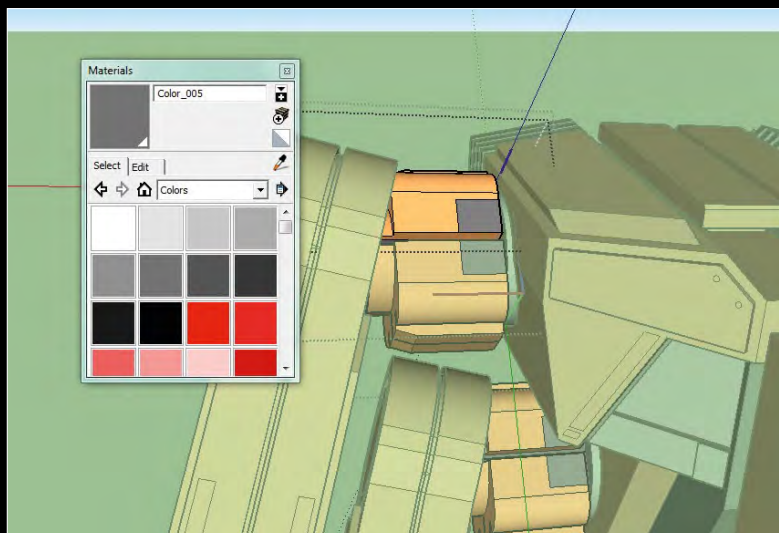
1 Paint entire components

The fastest way to change the overall look of your model is to paint entire components at once. When you click the Paint Bucket tool, a Materials dialog appears. Use the slide bar to select any colour you prefer, such as orange in this example. Now move your cursor to one of the model's components and click it to change its colour.



2 Colour individual surfaces

Right-click a component and select Edit component to colour individual details. Select the surface you want changed and colour it just as you did in the first step. The overall component keeps the colour you gave it earlier, but the selected detail acquires the new colour (grey in my example). Duplicate components in your model are changed in the same way.



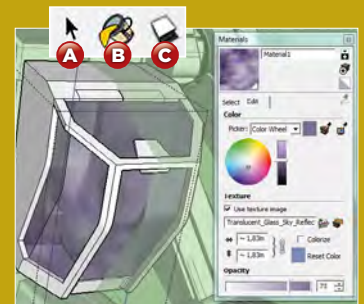
Artist PROFILE

Mark Roosien
COUNTRY: Netherlands

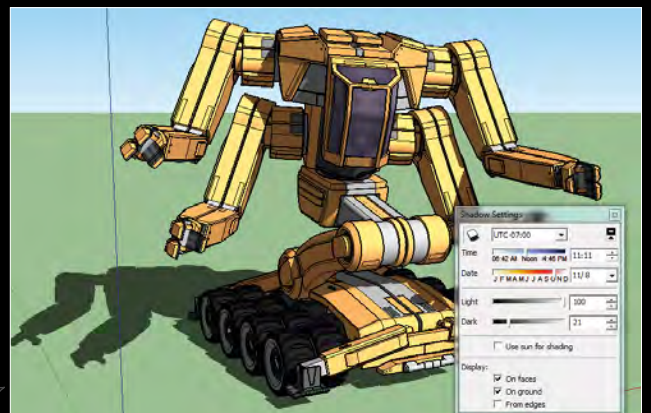


Mark is a self-taught artist who jumped from traditional media to SketchUp seven years ago. He specialises in nuts 'n' bolts sci-fi art. <http://ifxm.ag/mroosien>

WORKING WITH TEXTURES



In this article, I use (from left to right) the Select tool (A), the Paint Bucket tool (B) and the Show/Hide tool (C) that's part of the Shadow Settings dialog. When working with the Paint Bucket tool you'll often fill your objects with basic colours, but you can also use textured or translucent materials. Do this by selecting any group of materials, such as Translucent, from the drop-down menu in the Materials dialog. If the options on offer aren't quite to your liking, just select a material that comes close enough and click the Edit tab to change its properties. In this example I pick a translucent material for the cockpit windows, give it a blue haze and change the Opacity to suit the image.



3 Switch on the lights

Give your model a shadow by selecting Window>Shadows. A Shadow Settings dialog appears. Click the Show/Hide icon in the upper-left corner of the dialog to create shadow. Play with the upper two horizontal sliders to change the light angle as you see fit. Use the lower two sliders to change the overall contrast.

Artist insight **CONCEPT ART MASTERCLASS**

Donglu Yu, a senior concept artist in the video game industry, presents her tips for generating visually striking environment concepts

Artist **PROFILE**

Donglu Yu
COUNTRY: Canada



Donglu has surfed the boundless world of video games and

animations since childhood. She's worked on the Assassin's Creed sequels, Deus Ex: Human Revolution and Far Cry 4.
<http://ifxm.ag/d-yu>



**GET YOUR
RESOURCES**

See page 6 now!

Before I reveal how to create strong environments art, perhaps I should explain what I mean by strong art.

These are paintings that are easy to read, quickly conveying clear designs or stories to the viewer.

There can be few artists who haven't spent hours working on a piece, attempting to add details that end up

being unnecessary. My tips should help you to avoid falling into such a situation. You'll learn how to construct your images by building up a solid foundation and composition, design a lighting scheme that can help to sell your idea, before finally applying the detailing layer.

These tips will also help your conversation with the art directors when you work in a professional environment.

Sometimes, the art directors will just tell you that the piece doesn't feel right to them, but won't give you specific reasons. This situation is also likely to occur with clients who don't have an artistic background. The topics and visual advice that I'll be covering in this workshop will help you find out exactly what the art director and your potential clients are looking for.

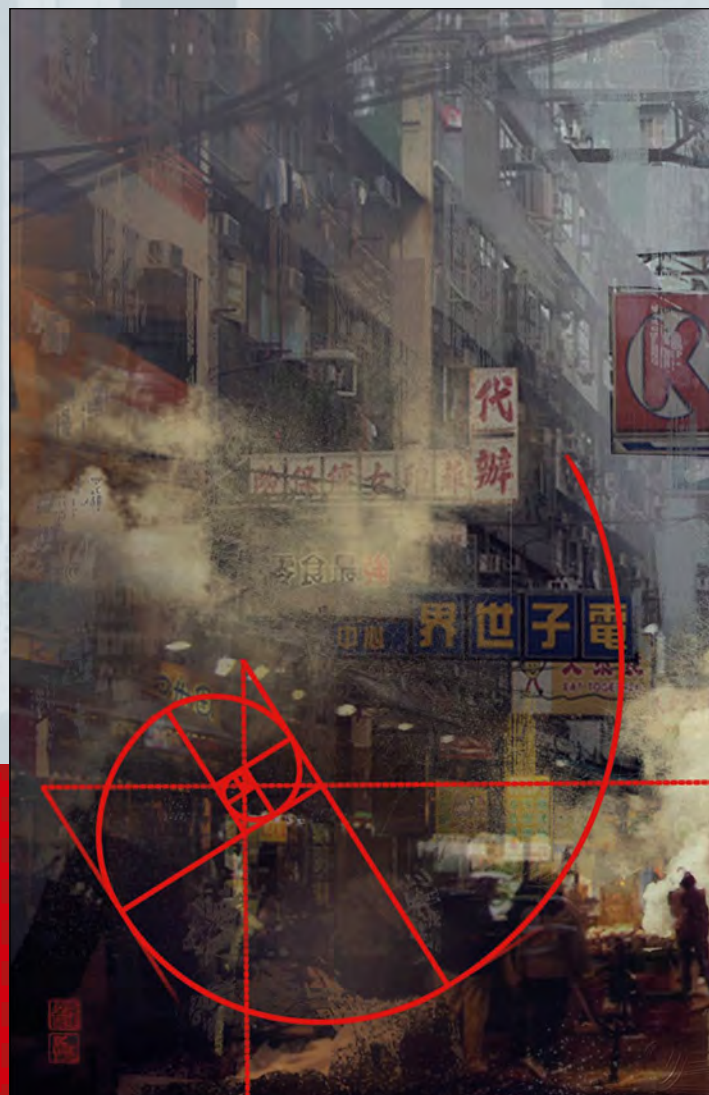
1 ESTABLISH A SILHOUETTE

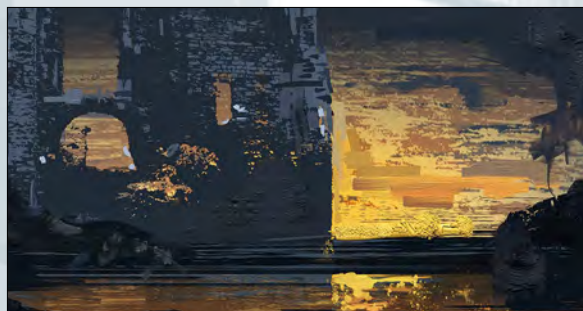
A silhouette is the outline of an object against a unique colour background. It helps the viewer to quickly recognise the subject matter, such as robots, cityscapes or characters. A strong silhouette will ensure your designs have greater visual impact. It's a great way to capture the essence of your subject, and you can do it with a simple black pen or marker.



2 COMPOSITION RULES

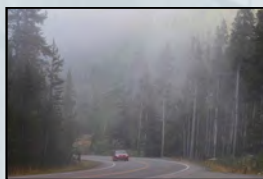
The Rule of Thirds is a popular composition tool, because it's both simple and effective. Divide your image into thirds vertically and horizontally: the focus point of your images should appear on the points where the lines cross. The Golden Ratio, meanwhile, has its basis in mathematics. It's been used in diverse disciplines such as architecture and oil paintings, but for the composition purpose, all you need to do is apply the shape of the Golden Ratio over your art and see if your focal points follow the ratio's distinctive shape.



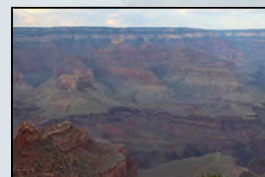


3 BRUSH STROKES

Your brushstrokes should reveal the material, textures, body structures, and changes in lighting and volumes. This example has been created using ArtRage's Roller and Oil Painting tools. I've used small brushstrokes to indicate highlights, while larger, wide brushstrokes emphasise the change of volume on the rocks. Large brushstrokes are also used to indicate areas of light and shadow, to further enhance the volume differences.



Fog density
Rock shapes
Lighting

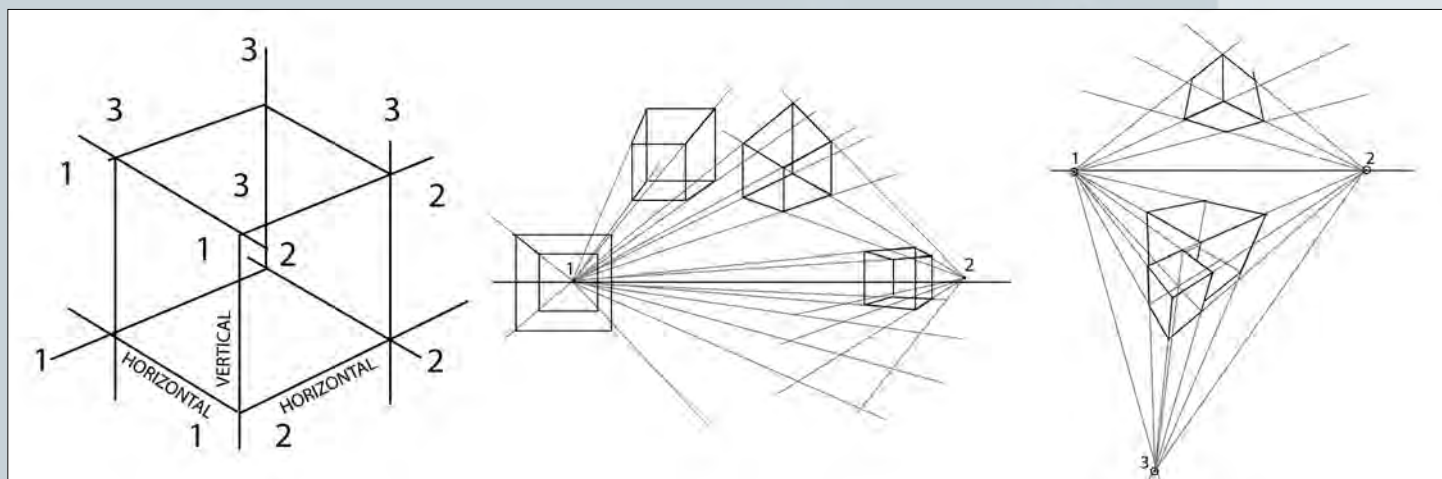


4 BUILD UP A REFERENCE BOARD

It's crucial that you study your subject, and put together a digital reference board. Consider dividing your reference pictures into different categories, such as fog density or rock shapes. In addition, having a reference board to hand makes it much easier to explain to your art director what your goals are if you're able to point to specific photographs.



“The Golden Ratio has been used in diverse disciplines such as architecture and oil paintings”



5 PERSPECTIVE IS KEY

Perspective is one of the foundations of art that you should make an effort to study thoroughly. Incorrect perspective in an image – particularly environments designs – will result in your images lacking any sense of realism and authenticity. Let's take a basic example. The edges of a cube form three sets of parallel lines: one vertical and two

horizontal. Each set has its own vanishing point. Based on these three major sets of lines and the rules of convergence, there are three types of perspective. What distinguishes each type is simply your point of view. The subject matter doesn't change, just your view of it and how the sets of parallel lines appear to converge.

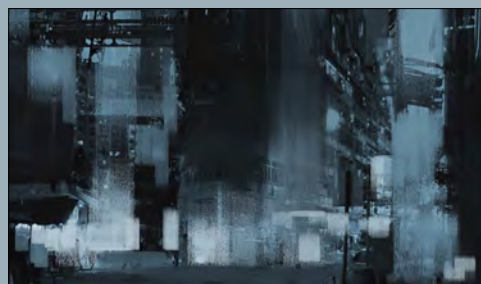


6 KEEP THE VALUES SIMPLE

For the purpose of value study, you can plan compositions with limited values by limiting the design to three simple tones: light, middle and dark. You can then build thumbnails or preliminary sketches with greater efficiency. This is an effective way to plan a painting, because it's both fast and involves a straightforward painting process. Instead of becoming carried away with the figures' details, you should only be concerned with their overall position and gesture.

7 DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN MOONLIGHT AND ARTIFICIAL LIGHT

There are two types of light source at night: moonlight and artificial light. In a natural landscape setting, far away from the usual infrastructure that accompanies an urban environment, illumination from the moon is usually portrayed as a pale yellow, which contrasts nicely with the dark blue colour of the vegetation. However, in a city night scene, the moon's light is often represented as blue, which enables it to dramatically complement the warm tones of artificial light.



A I start an underlay painting with a desaturated blue, aiming for a scene that's softly lit by the bluish moonlight, without additional light sources. I think about my shapes and silhouettes and try to find a visually appealing composition.





“The sunlit areas accentuate the volumes of the mountain”

8 SIDE LIGHTING SHOWS OFF VOLUMES

The sun produces a direct light source. In contrast, illumination from the sky is a diffuse, soft light that comes from many directions at once. Direct sunlight creates hard-edged cast shadow on the ground, and these shadows become darker and bluer depending

on how high the sun is in the sky. The presence of clouds reduces the colour vibrancy of the shadows. The areas that I've indicated with red lines are the ones hit directly by the sunlight. These illuminated areas also accentuate the volumes of the mountain rocks. ➡



B During the final painting stage of the image, I introduce crowds of people, advertising signs, cars and building details to make this snapshot of city nightlife more vivid. I also use smoke and fog to strengthen my atmospheric depth of the scene.



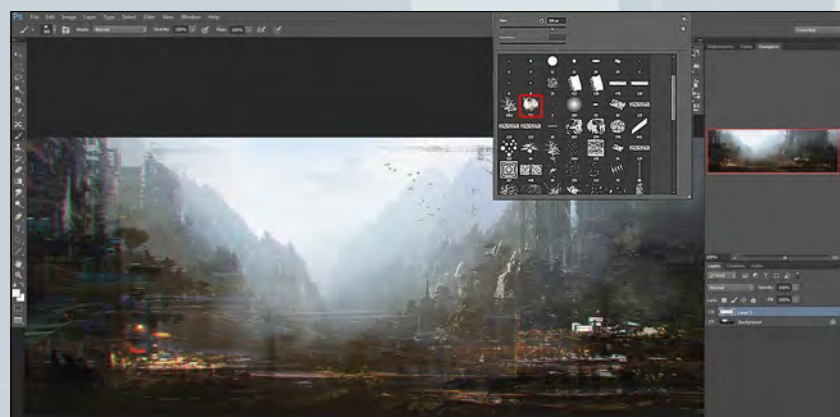
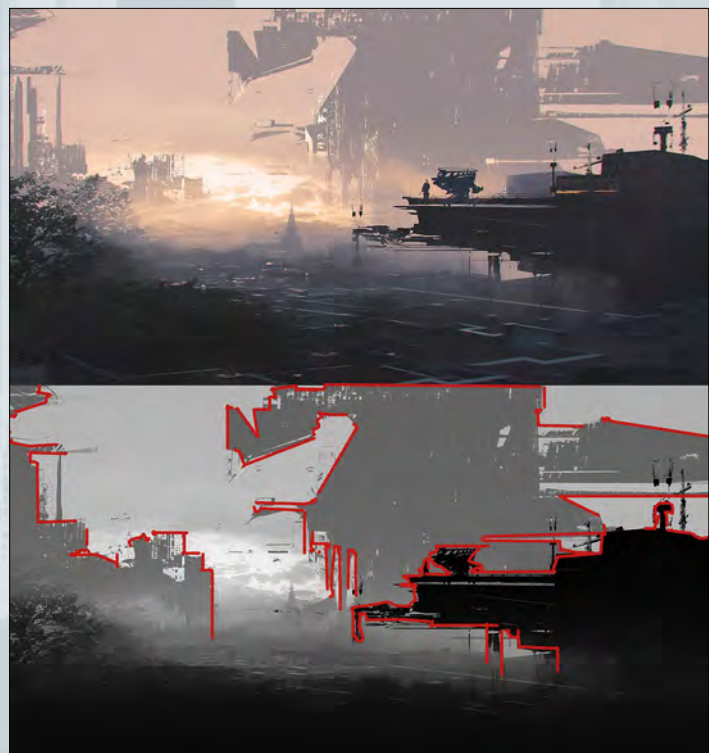
C Then I carefully paint in the warm artificial light sources at the base of the building, because that's where the stores or food stands are usually located. At this stage, I think about colour contrast and the level of saturation of my warm- and cold-dominated areas.





9 COMPLEMENTARY COLOURS

Complementary colours are located on the opposite sides on the colour wheel. When placed next to each other, they create strong visual contrast and reinforce each other's colour vibrancy. The most commonly used combinations are red and green, yellow and violet, and blue and orange. The Impressionists used vibrant colour brushstrokes next to each other to enhance the lighting. In this digital sketch, I've accentuated the blue colour on the spaceship's hull by combining it with orange engines.

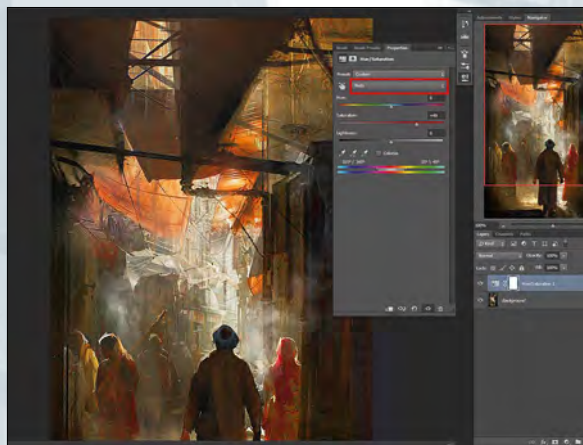


10 TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ATMOSPHERIC DEPTH

Atmospheric depth is an important part of any composition because it separates the fore-, mid- and background. A distinct separation of the three planes increases the readability of your image, which in turn increases the visual impact of your image. Elements that are further away from the viewer become less detailed as a result of different weather conditions, such as fog, haze, humidity and pollution. The background plane will usually feature less saturation, contrast and details. I often use a soft Cloud brush in Photoshop to mimic this effect.

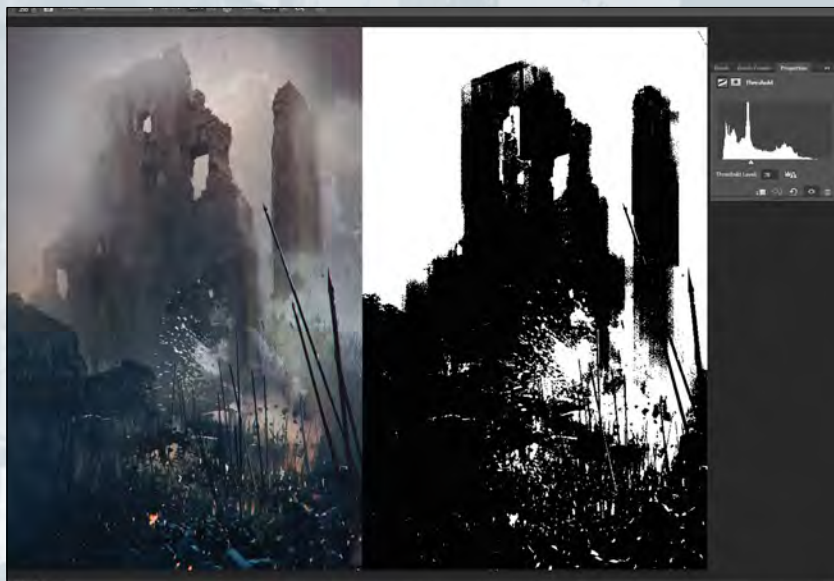
11 SHOW OFF YOUR SILHOUETTES

Contre-jour in French translates as 'against daylight'. It's probably my favourite lighting condition to use because it emphasises the silhouette of any objects. This lighting setup occurs when any object blocks the sun or any other light sources behind it. In most cases the light spills over the edges of the objects. Notice how the silhouettes of my shapes become more readable with the sunset lighting in this example.



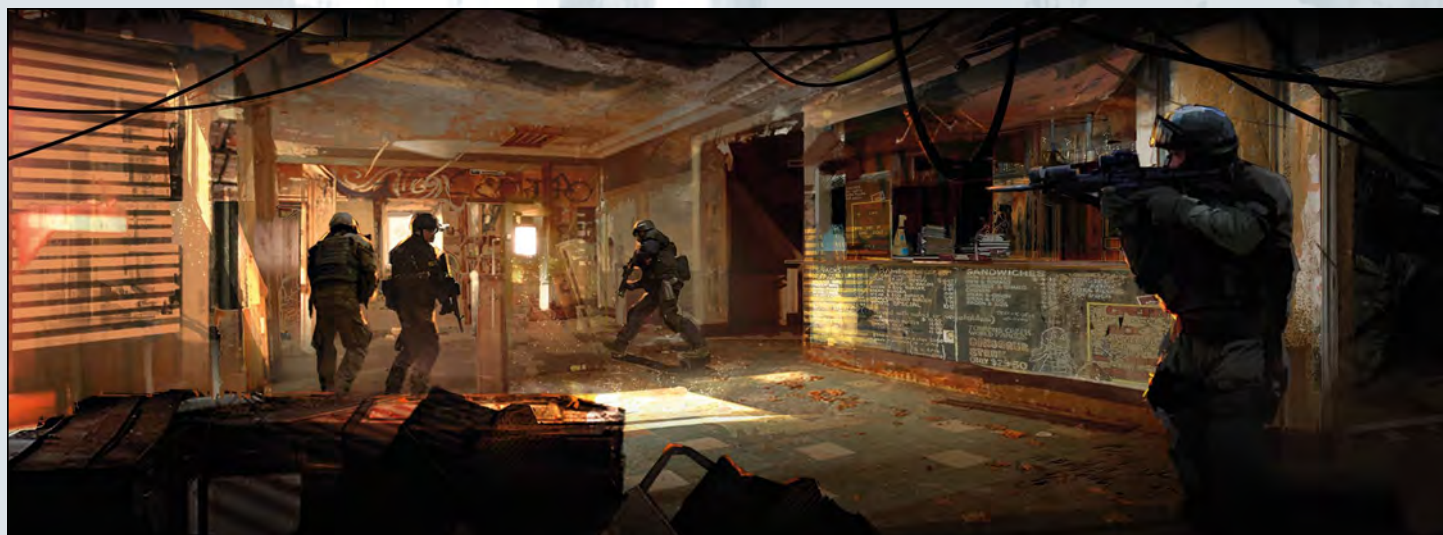
12 COLOUR VIBRANCY

Colour vibrancy can be a strong design tool, because it can play a big role in how the brain analyses certain lighting situations. As long as you apply the basic rules, you can use more stylised colour choices that will help to give your scene a specific tone and feel. You can boost colour vibrancy with an Adjustment layer. In this painting, if I had to adjust the colour vibrancy that's created by the sunlight shining through the fabrics, I would create a Hue/Saturation layer, select Reds instead of Master and increase the Saturation level. This approach means I'm only altering the saturation level of my red tones, and not changing other colour channels.



13 VARYING YOUR TEXTURE DENSITIES

This term refers to the artistic choice of where to place characters and objects, and where to leave some empty space in an image. Not only can it create a strong composition, it can also let the viewer's eyes rest on the details that you've painted on certain areas. To double-check my image's texture density, I often use a Threshold adjustment layer that turns my painting black and white. The noisy area should be the part where I want to create action. The part where the large black shapes are should be where the viewers can rest their eyes.



14 LIGHT AND SHADOW

Learning how to paint sunlight and shade is a key painting skill. Lit areas can form interesting shapes that can enhance the graphical quality of your artwork. Here, I've deconstructed one of my finished paintings by making it black and white, before tracing all of the shaded parts in red. Notice how each dark shape is placed against a well-lit background. This enables the viewer to quickly interpret the characters' action. These dark areas also create a pleasing visual rhythm to the image, which can be appreciated on the subconscious level.

“Illuminated areas can form interesting shapes that can enhance the graphical quality of your artwork”

Next month in...
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX

Creature design

Legendary artist and animator **Aaron Blaise**
shares his amazing techniques with us!

ISSUE 116 ON SALE 7 November 2014

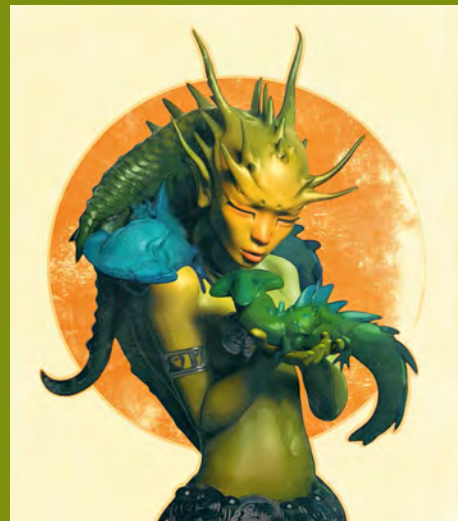


ImagineFX December 2014

Featuring...

Dragon lady

Pascal Blanché reveals the methods he uses to create his unique and beautiful art.



Animal kingdom

A glimpse into the art and inspirations of the world's leading creature artists.

Into the light

Use light and shade to add definition to your images, with Olly Lawson.

Thumbnailing

Matt Tkocz shows why the start of any painting process is the most important.



Aaron was lead animator on The Lion King and has been Oscar-nominated for Brother Bear, which he directed





Photoshop PAINT RETRO GAME CHARACTERS

Remko Troost passes on his industry advice for conceiving video game characters who inhabit the fabulous, taste-free world of the 80s

Artist PROFILE

Remko Troost
COUNTRY: Canada



Remko is a concept artist based at Ubisoft Montreal. He

created weapons, props and characters for Far Cry 3, Assassin's Creed 3, and is working on the upcoming next-gen game Assassin's Creed Unity.

www.pandraw.com

**GET YOUR
RESOURCES**

See page 6 now!

When designing a character for a video game, it's not just about painting some cool-looking dude. A lot of things have to be considered before settling on their final look, and changes are often made while the title is in development. Possible reasons can include a new take on the scenario, animation conflicts or parts of the game being cut.

You'll have to deal with all of these situations as a concept artist. Your job is

to adapt, learn, react, interact and find visual solutions for not only a character's appearance, but also their animation cycles, attitude and so on. Concept art is a language through which you express your ideas – and the more fluent you are, the clearer things will be for your colleagues who are modelling, animating and giving life to the characters you've created.

I think it's not just about drawing or painting skills, but also about imagination and creativity, visual

problem solving and understanding the needs of the production environment. Your knowledge about the universe that the characters inhabit is key.

For this workshop I'll share some tips on developing concept art for video games by creating two characters who are straight out of the 80s. I'll try to explain a few things about the character development process, key parts of the creative process and what mediums I use. Okay girls and boys, let's rock!



1 Research and development

Concept art is a language through which ideas are explored and the artist's creativity is expressed. Indeed, channelling your imagination and creativity are as important as your drawing and painting skills. Drawing, painting, sculpting... when trying to develop a new idea it's not important how you do it. You're solving a problem visually, and so the key to getting the right answers is to ensure your idea is easily understood by the viewer.

2 The medium

I like to use different mediums when creating a new character. Each medium has its own characteristic and forces you to approach your subject in a different way, which in turn can lead to new ideas. Having said this, sometimes ideas can pop into my head when I'm not at my drawing table: on my way home from work, out while having a drink, walking in the park, listening to music, or observing people and my surroundings. When I'm back at my desk I'll get my ideas into Photoshop as soon as possible.



research_remko_workshop.psd @ 66,7% (RGB/8)



Shortcuts Selection on a new layer

Ctrl+Shift+C then V (PC)
Cmd+Shift+C then V (Mac)
Copy your selection on a
new layer above
your art.



PRO SECRETS

Short cuts

There are a lot of keys that I don't use on my keyboard. So I assign Photoshop commands to them, such as filling in a selection with foreground colour, creating a brush or flipping an image. This speeds up my workflow significantly.

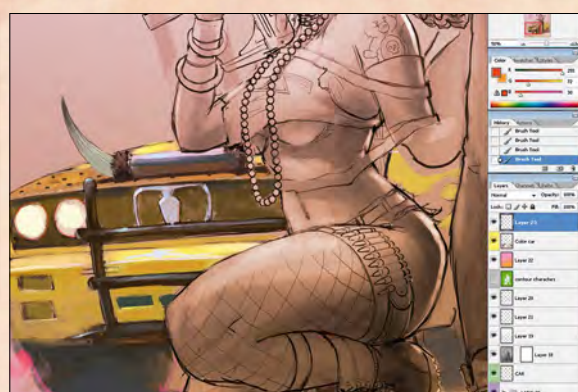


3 Pen and paper

For my retro characters I start with paper and pencil, or rather a Pentel FP10. I like the line work approach because you're talking shapes and forms directly. Once I find an idea that I think will work, I'll do some more sketches in Photoshop. From now on I'll keep the creative process in Photoshop, which makes it easy to carry out tweaks and edits to my concepts.

4 First values

Now let's go back to the 80s! Although I'm a product of that era myself, I do some research. I like tracking down my references, but prefer to not have them beside when I start drawing, so I can develop my own ideas. Once my characters are blocked in I start painting in black and white, which enables me to focus on volume, values, light, shadows and bounce light.



5 Folded cloth

Here's my little trick for depicting folded cloth. I create a flat or rack brush first with some texture in it to make it look less digital, and in the Natural Brush Media window on the shape Dynamics tab I set Angle Jitter to Pen Pressure. This makes my brush react a little strangely and it takes a while to get used to, but it does help me paint cloth realistically.

6 First colours

I place a new Overlay, Multiply or Hard Light layer above my art and start painting in colour. Sometimes I select the area I want to colour using the Lasso tool, copy it on to a new layer and try different colours using the Hue/Saturation tool. I often start colouring the background because this will determine the colours of my bounce lights and shadows in the foreground.



7 A flattened canvas

I like to use layers for organising my work, but prefer to drop all my layers once I'm happy with my progress and simply paint on a flat canvas. It feels a lot closer to painting traditionally, because I become more impulsive and instinctive in my approach. If changes or corrections are needed then I'll do them directly on the canvas using the Lasso or Pen tool.

8 Painting painterly

There are many ways to make your image look painterly. You could just put a texture on a new Overlay layer above it, or build a texture into your brush. I prefer working with a range of textured brushes, keeping Flow and Opacity quite low. Try using Brush mode rather than Layer mode while painting to produce some great effects.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH:
HARD ELLIPTICAL 56

PAINT PRESSUREON

PAINT REMKO 100

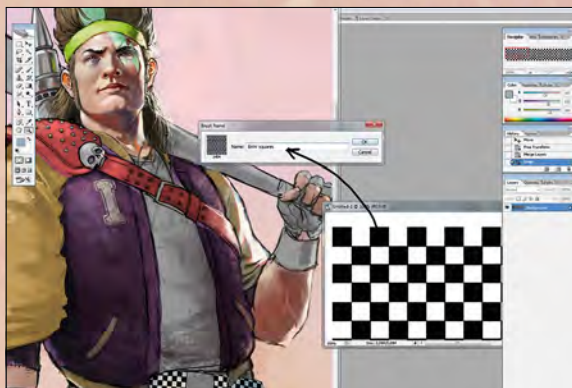
ROUGH PAINT

These custom brushes help me achieve a painterly or watercolour look in my art. Adjust their Opacity or Flow settings and see what effects you can produce.



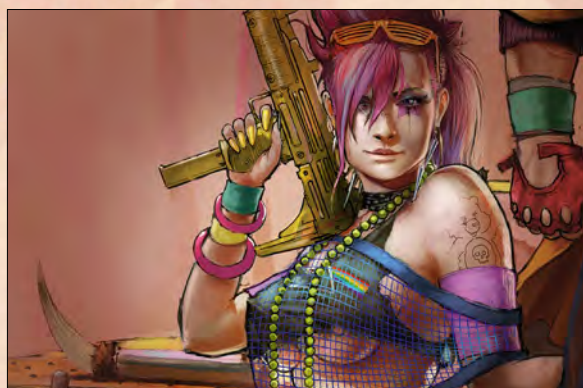
9 Flipping and checking

I create a shortcut in Photoshop so I can quickly flip my image. This enables me to see how my anatomy is developing, or any proportion errors that I need to correct. I also place a Color layer above my art filled with white; when active the art becomes black and white. I check it every now and then to keep track of my values while I'm colouring and painting.



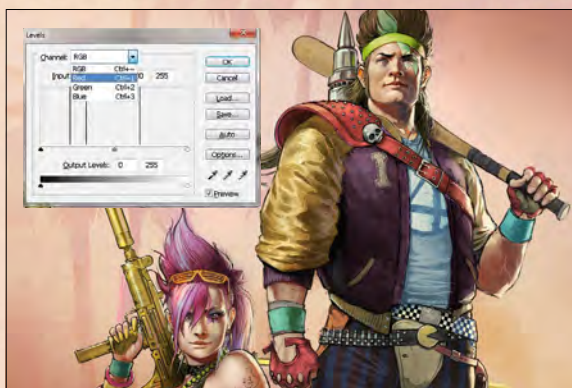
10 Creating brushes while painting

I keep a white canvas handy for trying out custom brushes. Once I've created a brush I adjust its properties in the Natural Brush Media window. In this instance I paint squares that I later manipulate with the Warp tool to make them fit on the belt. I prefer to find a solution to texture or material requirements with brushes, rather than using photos.



11 Warping and Liquefying

I create a brush for the girl's net top and use the Warp tool so that it follows her body. The Warp and Liquify tools are good for correcting shapes or forms. If I need to correct an element I use the Lasso tool to separate it out, then press Cmd+Alt+C and Cmd+Alt+V. This cuts out the area and puts it on a new layer. Then I make my edits, merge my layers and continue painting.



12 Final pass

I apply Blur or Sharpen to add mood, and adjust colours and contrast using Color Balance, Levels or Curves. Sometimes I use a soft Round brush at a low Opacity on a Multiply layer above my art, or add mood with shadows from objects outside the picture. I also make things pop using bright colours on an Overlay layer. Then I merge my layers and paint some highlights.



13 Explore your creations

When creating characters for film or games, you'll probably need to explore your character more. Try out different angles, poses, moves or expressions. The people modelling or animating your character might need more information on the way they look from a certain angle. So don't stop at just one pose or expression. Get to know them!



14 Tell a story

The key aspect about creating characters is their story. That's why I've added this little Rubik Cube fella. It's crucial that you get to know as much as possible about the characters and their story before you create them. The more you know about them, the better you'll feel about sliding under their skin and finding the right visual solutions to bring them to life.

Shortcuts

Invert your mask

Cmd+shift+I (Mac)
Ctrl+Shift+I (PC)
Use this to paint either inside or outside a selection.

PRO SECRETS

Creating colour palettes

If you have to draw the same character in different poses, save their colour palette. This will ensure that your figure has a consistent look in all of your art.

Next month

ImagineFX Workshops

Animal rights

Get better at creature art with Aaron Blaise.

3D know-how

Pascal Blanché reveals how he creates his work.

Thumbnails

Start out with the right concepts, with Matt Tkocz.

Dark knight

Depict beautiful light and shade with Olly Lawson.

Space girl

Zezhou Chen paints a starry sci-fi scene.

PAINT AMAZING ART IN PENCILS, OILS, ACRYLICS & MORE!

FANTASY

illustrator

Issue 2

Sharpen your
**DRAWING
SKILLS**

Improve your figure
drawing with our
unmissable guide



Gritty textures



Adding detail

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Paint stunning
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Brilliant new ways to start creating works of art,
with advice from the world's best artists

Inside!

86

PAGES OF

IN-DEPTH

WORKSHOPS

See back cover for more!



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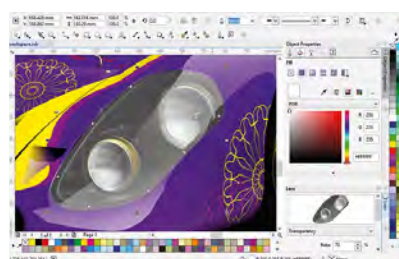
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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Reviews



Artist's Choice Award
Art resources with a five-star rating receives the ImagineFX Artist's Choice award!

The latest digital art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team...



SOFTWARE

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Autodesk's software is both liberating and amazing.

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Find out how Corel's vector-editing software has become more appealing.



93 ArtPose & ArtPose Female Edition

Nifty iPad apps put fully adjustable 3D mannequins in your pocket.



HARDWARE

94 34UM95 LCD monitor

Discover if a super-widescreen monitor with five million pixels has a place in your digital art studio.

94 N20p Chromebook

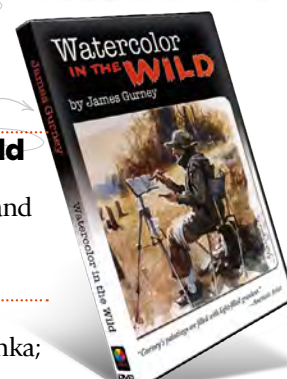
Should you invest in one of Google's low-cost laptops?



TRAINING

95 Watercolor in the Wild

James Gurney gives you the confidence to paint with intent and speed when on location.



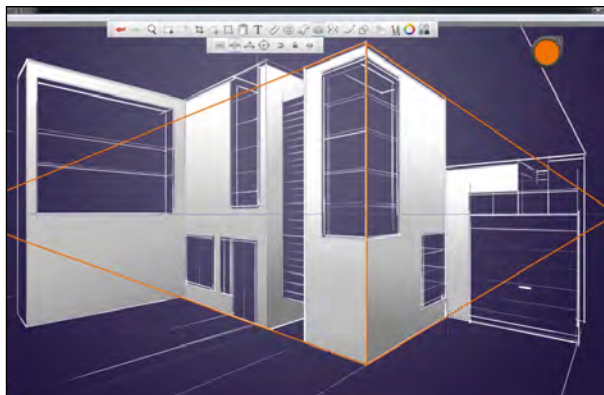
BOOKS

96 New reads

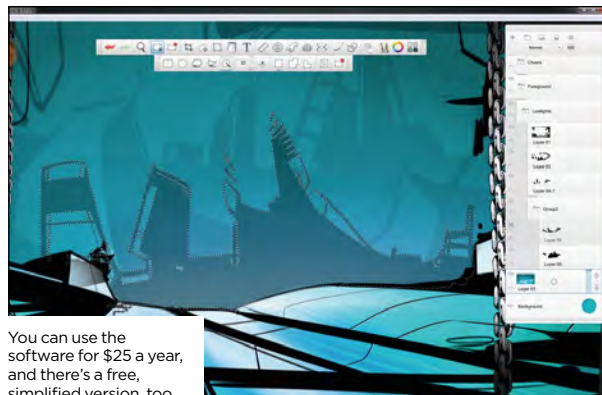
Substrata; The Art of Greg Spalenka; Brian Froud's Faeries' Tales.

RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious

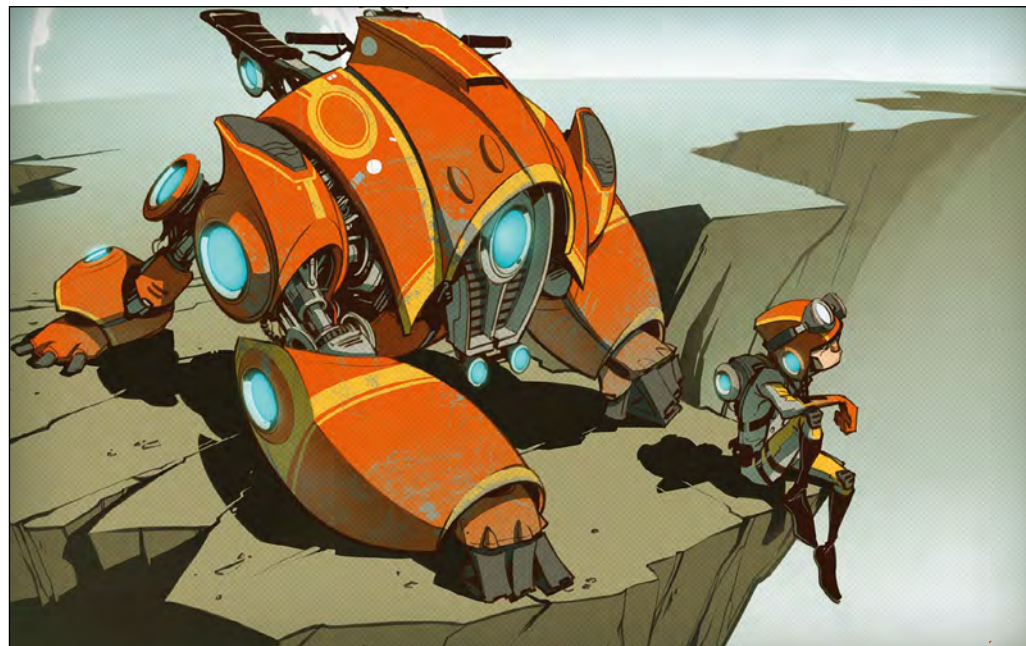
Useful new features in SketchBook Pro 7 include a Flipbook option and these perspective grids.



This Manga-esque piece was created jointly by CreatureBox's Dave Guertin and Greg Baldwin.



You can use the software for \$25 a year, and there's a free, simplified version, too.



© CreatureBox: Dave Guertin and Greg Baldwin.



© CreatureBox: Dave Guertin and Greg Baldwin.

The openness of Autodesk's software inspires lighter and more fluid art.



SketchBook's brushes include everything you'll ever need, and they work just like their real-life versions.

SketchBook Pro 7

MAC & PC

LEARNING CURVES Autodesk's art software is both liberating and amazing – once you get your head around its interface...

Price £50 (upgrade £40.25) **Company** Autodesk **Web** www.autodesk.com **Contact** Via website

Autodesk's SketchBook Pro app has become such a huge hit on tablets that it's easy to forget it began its life as a desktop program. The latest version reminds us that it's still very much alive and well on large and unwieldy computers and, in fact, better than ever.

However, there's a bit of a learning curve, especially if you've never used SketchBook Pro before. The interface is a little too simplistic in appearance, with no labels and lots of slightly confusing colour wheels and menus. There are also two moveable 'pucks' that hover above the canvas. At first these look like colour selections for your primary and secondary brushes, and indeed, one enables you to choose

your hue... but the other grey one actually sets the size of the brush.

Another slightly odd element for those new to SketchBook is the Lagoon, a quarter-circle menu that gives you quick access to essential functions and features. Access it and the software will resize itself, you'll have quadrilateral symmetry turned on, and you'll be drawing with a brush as big as your face – until you get the hang of it.

Yet once you grasp its workings, SketchBook Pro 7 is nothing short of revelatory. It's a piece of software that looks and works like no other, and the minimalist approach means that it feels open and freeing, and your art becomes more organic as a result.

If you're an old hat at using SketchBook Pro you'll feel right at

DETAILS

Features

- Flipbook animation
- Steady stroke
- Ruler, ellipse and French curve
- Distort transform
- Custom brushes
- Layer enhancements
- Copic markers and colour library
- New selection tools

System Requirements

PC: Windows 7 or 8, 1GHz CPU, 1GB RAM, 256MB graphics card, tablet
Mac: OS X 10.7 or higher, 1GHz CPU and 1GB RAM, 256MB graphics card tablet

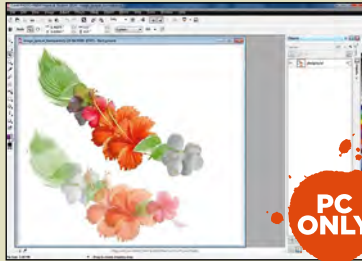
Rating



home. New to version 7 are perspective grids and the nifty Flipbook feature that enables you to create flipbook-style animations. There are no tweens or skeletal animation systems here: instead, it's an introduction to proper old-school, frame-by-frame cel animations.

Despite our initial problems getting our heads around SketchBook, it's still one of the best pieces of art software out there. Autodesk has even added a subscription plan, which means you can use the software for a very reasonable \$25 a year, and there's a stripped-back free version that you can try for as long as you like, before buying the full version. But, most importantly, it makes digital drawing plain ol' fashioned fun. ●

This stripped-back version of CorelDRAW still includes more than enough for most artists.



PC ONLY

CorelDRAW Home & Student Suite X7

HOME SCREEN Corel's vector-editing software just got more appealing

Price £100

Company Corel

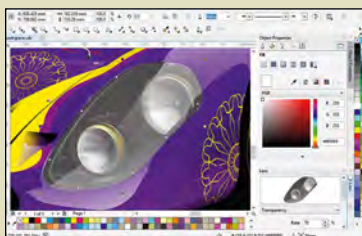
Web www.coreldraw.com

RATING

Back in issue 110 we looked at CorelDraw Graphics Suite X7, the all-in-one design software package. Its target audience is more designers than artists, but it's still useful and a great entry point into both vector graphics and photo editing. The most off-putting thing was its £479 asking price, though.

Designed for non-commercial uses, the Home & Student version of the software is priced at a far more reasonable £100, but strips back some of the features. It lacks higher-end aspects such as native 64-bit support, macro functions and CMYK printing. It also comes with less content – you'll only find 1,300 pieces of clipart over the pro version's 10,000, for example.

However, these are all elements of the software that are going to be fairly unnecessary for the majority of users, especially artists. The comprehensive vector editing is still much the same, and it's ideal for backdrops and landscapes. We definitely recommend this lower-price option over the more expensive version.



The £100 price point will certainly appeal to creative users on a budget.

ArtPose & ArtPose Female Edition

iOS ONLY

PORTABLE POSES These rather nifty iPad apps put fully adjustable 3D mannequins in your pocket

Price £1.99 each **Company** Shawn Ogle **Web** www.art-pose.com **Contact** shawn.p.ogle@gmail.com

With iPads fast becoming a dominant medium for portable digital art, it's no surprise that an entire ecosystem similar to PCs and Macs has sprung up. Instead of Photoshop and Painter we've got Procreate and ArtRage, and instead of Poser – the software for manipulating a virtual mannequin – we've got ArtPose.

Like the best apps, ArtPose is elegant in its simplicity. Fire it up and you're presented with either a male or female anatomical figure, depending on which version of the app you've bought. A drag of the finger rotates your view, and pinch or punch gestures zoom in and out. Icons in the four corners change the scene, adjusting haircuts and lighting, taking snapshots, moving the camera and adjusting the angles of various joints.

The latter is particularly easy-to-use, with spheres appearing above joints and swipes of the screen adjusting the angle and rotation of limbs. Like Poser, your model can be contorted into some very unusual, unnatural positions, but thankfully ArtPose includes a few predefined poses (for example,



Preset hand poses remove the fiddliness of bending individual knuckles and fingers.

running or skydiving) that you can alter further to achieve the perfect stance. You can then use the camera icon to take a JPG snap and then import it to your art program of choice so you can sketch around it, or use it as reference.

The models are of a high quality, and the Unity engine adds some impressive lighting effects. It's a shame you can't export figures as transparent PNG images so that they can be imported as a layer in Sketchbook without the slightly annoying backdrop. We'd also like to see a few more body types, but these are undoubtedly planned for further updates. Overall, though, this is a useful and well-priced app and a must-have for iPad artists.

DETAILS

Features

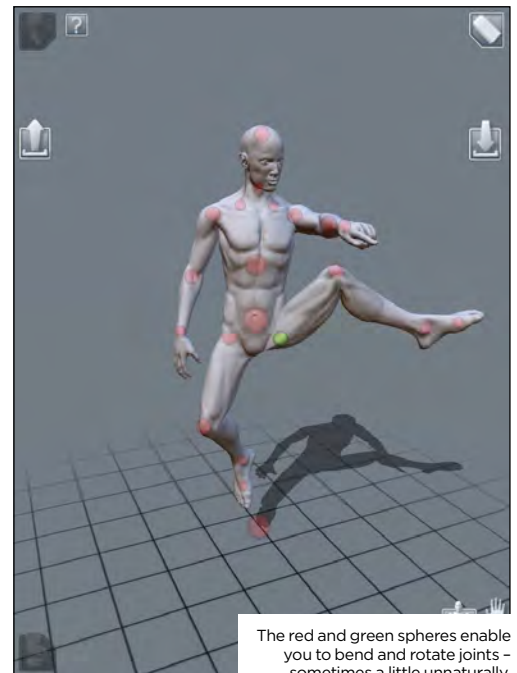
- Two high-detail models
- Three hair styles
- Image-based lighting
- Movable lights
- Preset hand poses
- Preset body poses
- Five save slots
- Pose erase feature
- Rotate, pan and zoom camera controls
- JPG export

System Requirements

iOS: Requires iOS 6.0 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad and iPod touch.

Rating

Altering the lighting can produce dramatically different results.



The red and green spheres enable you to bend and rotate joints – sometimes a little unnaturally.



34UM95 LCD monitor

BIG PICTURE Will a super-widescreen monitor with five million pixels appeal to artists and gamers?

Price £897 **Company** LG **Web** www.lg.com **Contact** Via website

Manufacturers have released a glut of 21:9 monitors recently – all 29-inch models with 2,560x1,080 pixel grids, and all a little bit silly. As large (and expensive) as the screens are, those 1,080 vertical pixels are simply too restrictive for general use, especially if you want to use your art station as a game and film hub.

Enter the new LG 34UM95. It ups the ante to 34 inches. Immediately, this helps to mitigate the old 29-inch form factor's visual shallowness. Then there's the resolution. It's now 3,440x1,440 pixels, which is the same vertical pixel count as the popular 27-inch segment and its 2,560x1,440 grid. Instantly, our previous objection – not enough vertical pixels for simple stuff like web browsing – melts away.

A digital artist would be able to work without segmenting their setup with two screens (which would both have to be colour calibrated). There's enough screen real estate with this one monitor to work on several things at once – or one lengthy video timeline – and the image quality is fantastic.

Gamers will also have plenty to gawk at. This LG gives you a much more life-like filling of your peripheral vision than a normal monitor, resulting in an immersive playing experience. If there's ever a device to appreciate the final results of the gaming industry's many concept artists, this is it. Saying that, it's worth noting that some games such as *Skyrim* don't support the 21:9 aspect ratio, and when you're streaming art tutorials or watching instructional DVDs, you'll be seeing some black bars on either sides of this monitor, because so much footage is recorded at 16:9.

It's unfortunate that the stand looks and feels cheap, although you can dismantle it and choose another that better suits your height demands. But the LG's major stumbling block is its astronomical price – in part, probably due to the Thunderbolt interface that means it's compatible with the latest Mac Pros. If you don't have the best part of a grand to splash on a monitor, hang fire for the much cheaper monitors using this same 34-inch panel that are due for release later this year.

Our review model of LG's behemoth of a monitor received lots of admiring looks in the ImagineFX office.

DETAILS

Features

- 34-inch panel size
- IPS panel type
- 3,440x1,440 native resolution
- 60Hz max refresh
- DisplayPort, HDMI and Thunderbolt inputs
- 3,440x1,440 pixels

Rating



When folded back the N20p essentially becomes a free-standing tablet.



N20p Chromebook

ART BOOK? Find out if Google's laptops are suitable for digital art...

Price £250

Company Lenovo

Web www.lenovo.com

RATING 

Chromebooks are low-cost laptops designed to run Google's browser-based Chrome OS. They've become hugely popular recently, so now's a great time to put one through its paces as a digital art machine. Our test Chromebook is Lenovo's latest, the N20p, which includes a neat double-jointed hinge that you can fold back like an easel, and a touch screen.

The strength of a Chromebook for artists lies in the web apps: Sketchpad, Sumo Painter and Pixlr are all perfectly decent little art programs, with Sketchpad's chunky icons being particularly suited to the responsive touch screen.

Sadly, the underpowered Chromebook suffers from lag when filling in large areas in Sumo Painter. Hardware compatibility isn't great, either: Wacom support is in the pipeline, but at the moment plugging in a tablet makes it function more like an awkward mouse than a refined digital quill.

There's a lot of promise in Chromebooks, and Lenovo's take on the form is the best we've seen yet, but they're not quite up to the job of creating amazing pieces of digital art yet.



Quick startup times make the N20p ideal for rapidly responding to emails or browsing online.

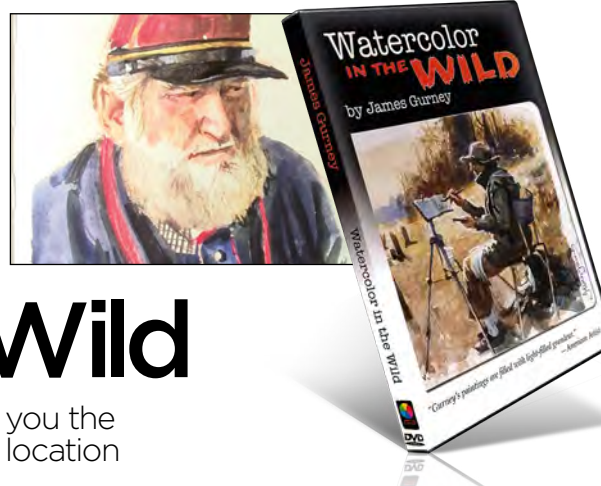
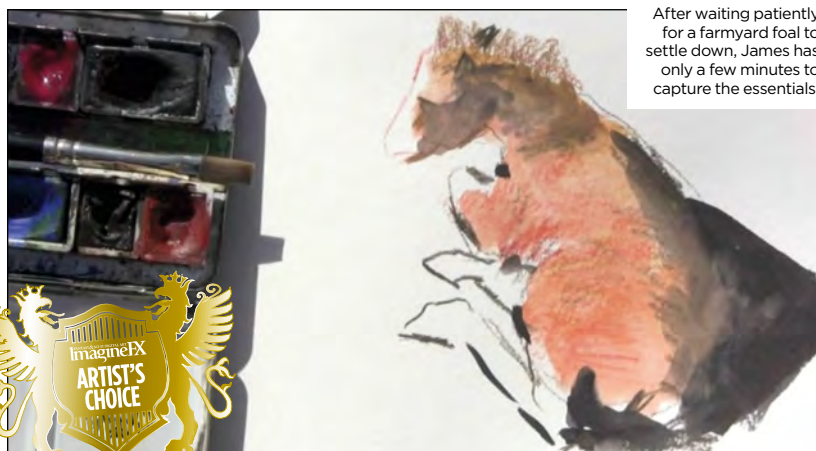
In this painting of an elaborate greenhouse, James intentionally limits the colour palette for a harmonious result.



Who needs an iPad? James' custom-made rig gives him everything he needs to paint at his fingertips.



After waiting patiently for a farmyard foal to settle down, James has only a few minutes to capture the essentials.



Watercolor in the Wild

LIGHT & LIQUID Artist and illustrator James Gurney gives you the confidence to paint with speed and intent when you're on location

Publisher Gurney Studio **Price** £18 (DVD), £9 (download) **Web** www.jamesgurney.com

Believe it or not, there was a time when artists wishing to paint on location had to manage without iPads. The celebrated illustrator James Gurney's latest video evokes that era with a charmingly low-tech overview of how to take a set of paints into the wild, and how to make the most of the tools at your disposal.

James starts by taking you through his portable painting kit. The basics of paint, brushes and sketchbook fit into a small bag, although the Heath Robinson contraption that goes on top of a tripod and ball head is rather less convenient. As well as marvelling at James' ingenuity at making sure everything he needs is close to hand, even avowed digital artists can find ideas of use in this practical section.

The core of *Watercolor in the Wild* presents six sequences in which James sets up his rig at a different location and starts painting. The challenge he must answer on each occasion is to

capture the level of detail he wants in what can be very limited time. You'll see how James tackles a variety of subjects where time is of the essence: whether it's a building in a scene where the light will change soon; a historical re-enactor who has to go to war; or a delightful foal who might stand up at any second. It's all beautifully filmed, although greater use of split-screen devices to show what James is seeing as he paints would help you understand his creative decisions better.

For anyone who's interested in watercolour and the basics of how to use this wonderful medium of liquid and light, *Watercolor in the Wild* is a great primer. James also has a detailed list of materials available to download. But even if you prefer to cling stubbornly to your tablet device and use a fingertip in place of a flat brush, you'll pick up a strong working process for analysing a scene and getting its essentials down on to the canvas without wasting precious time.



DETAILS

Topics covered

- Watercolor paint basics
- Outdoor kit essentials
- Painting a complex structure
- Painting a live animal
- Painting a human subject
- Painting a rich landscape
- Painting a museum exhibit
- Painting a changeable scene

Length

72 minutes

Rating



ARTIST PROFILE

JAMES GURNEY

James specialises in painting realistic images of scenes that can't be photographed, from dinosaurs to ancient civilizations. He's also a plein air painter and sketcher, believing that making studies from observation fuels his imagination. James taught himself to draw by reading books about Norman Rockwell and Howard Pyle. He received a degree in anthropology at the University of California, but chose a career in art. James has written the instruction books *Imaginative Realism* and *Color and Light*.



www.gurneyjourney.blogspot.com



Substrata

GAME OVER? A fantastic compendium featuring over 80 artists emerges from the ashes of the abandoned Darksiders franchise



Editor Paul Richards **Publisher** Udon Entertainment **Price** £34 **Web** www.udonentertainment.com **Available Now**

Darksiders, released in 2010, and its 2012 sequel neatly combined Zelda-esque questing, Devil May Cry-style hack-and-slash and a beautifully extravagant art style. It looked a world away from its contemporary action-RPGs, with chunky character design and gothic levels cast in purple and green neon light.

Alas, the collapse of THQ last year led to Darksiders developer Vigil Games being dragged under, too – and the possibility of a third instalment to Darksiders went with it. However, Vigil Games' concept artist Paul Richards invited artists to contribute to a what-if book of Darksiders 3 art, asking for everything a pretend AAA title could require, including characters, environments and even logos.

Many artists responded to the call, and Paul whittled them down to the 80



US artist Jason Pichon contributed a range of character and creature concepts.

Miroslav Petrov's lush fantasy landscapes earned him a place in the book.



or so featured here. Despite the distinctiveness of Darksiders' art style, the artists have different interpretations of what they'd like to see in the theoretical threequel. Some, such as Jonathan Tiong, take the games' twisted, dysmorphic monsters to their logical extreme with a nightmarishly proportioned griffin-type creature. Hide Hu, meanwhile, follows the Darksiders design bible with a wonderfully ornate demon knight.

Perhaps the best place to start, though, is with the art of Paul himself. As progenitor and curator of the project he has the best sense of its direction and style. There's a certain floral theme to his work, with a dandelion-like princess taking centre

stage and a fungal zombie backing it up. His work starts out with grace and serenity, but becomes more nightmarish as the chapter goes on – which is exactly what we want from a book on Darksiders.

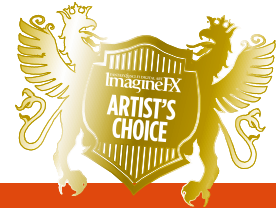
It's a fascinating tome, and one which can be wildly incoherent and inconsistent, but this is part of the anarchic charm: it's a glimpse into what AAA games would be if they weren't controlled by men in suits more interested in protecting their bottom line than having fun. We hope that it rekindles interest in the potential of Darksiders 3. After all, most of the hard work has already been done.

RATING 5/5



The Art of Greg Spalenka

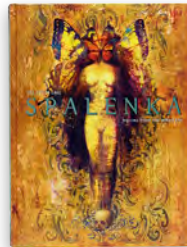
BOXING CLEVER Legendary artist Greg guides us through his career so far, which takes in Mike Tyson, god-like Lions and Polaroid pictures



Author Greg Spalenka **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £25 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

Something of a hero in the world of illustration, Greg Spalenka's career has spanned four decades and numerous forms, from book jackets to film concept art. This book covers everything from his Polaroids in the 1970s to his work for a perfume company last year.

Along the way we get to see his amazing illustrations for Sports Illustrated, Playboy and Psychology Today, as well as more personal works such as his graphite portraits and



The Eyes of the Unicorn was a children's book published in 2007 that Greg illustrated.



eventual mastering of digital mediums. It's a tribute to Greg's versatility as an artist that there are no real overriding themes or styles here; his gloomy but powerful portrait of Mike Tyson is worlds away – literally – from the cute and clean aliens that populate the movie *Escape From Planet Earth*.

As a book this is beautifully presented, too, with its images coming to life thanks to its bigger-than-average

size, and succinct but relevant text that never feels intrusive. The real highlights here are Greg's illustrations for *Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, including a wonderfully ethereal image of Aslan sitting proudly in a cherry blossom. It's the icing on what is a filling, substantial and nutritious art cake.

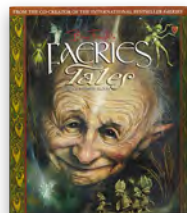
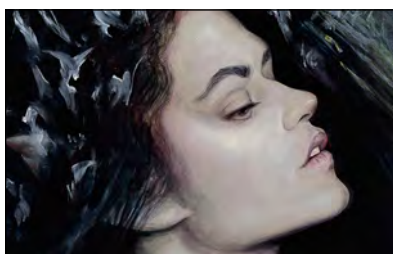
RATING 5/5

Brian Froud's Faeries' Tales

AIRY FAERY Celebrated illustrators Brian and Wendy Froud invite us into their fantasy world for a nose around their whimsical creations

Authors Brian and Wendy Froud **Publisher** Abrams Books **Price** £22 **Web** www.abramsbooks.com **Available** Now

As the new *Muppets* films induce giggles in cinemas around the world, it's easy to forget that Jim Henson's Creature Workshop also produced some darker and more iconic fantasy films in the 1980s, such as *Labyrinth* and *The Dark Crystal*. The spirit of those movies lives on in Brian and Wendy Froud's *Faeries' Tales*, which comes as little surprise because the married couple contributed design work to those classics of 80s puppet-based cinema.



Kristen Stewart's likeness accompanies the entry on the intriguing-sounding *Dream Catcher*.



The book tells the story of the Dusters, a family of faeries who roam among humans, collecting their memories. These faeries are puppets created by Wendy, but they're interspersed with Brian's paintings of various other inhabitants of the faery world, complete with their own short stories. These are often alternative takes on popular fairy tales, and it's a great place to look if you want to see

how to give original characters more backstory and flesh them out.

Brian and Wendy's art is very good, and they've captured a lot of the joyful self-belief of Jim Henson's fantasy movies. At the same time, the book can be cloying in its cuteness. Whether or not you'll like it will depend on your opinion of the titular fantasy creatures.

RATING 3/5

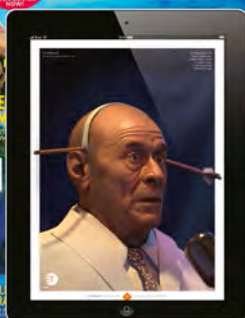
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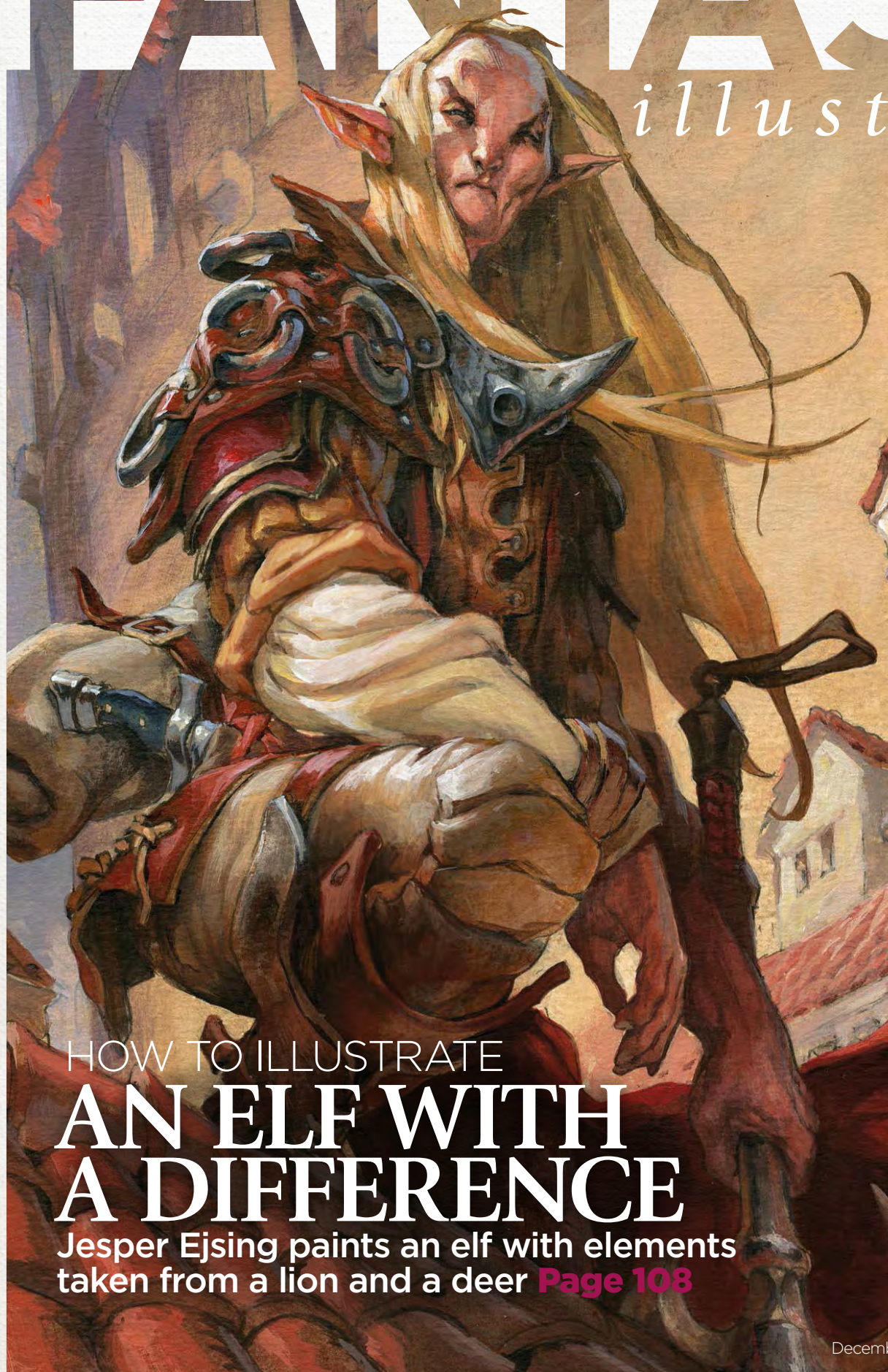


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FANTASY

illustrator



HOW TO ILLUSTRATE
**AN ELF WITH
A DIFFERENCE**

Jesper Ejsing paints an elf with elements
taken from a lion and a deer **Page 108**

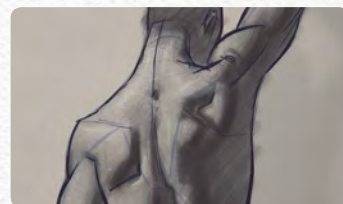
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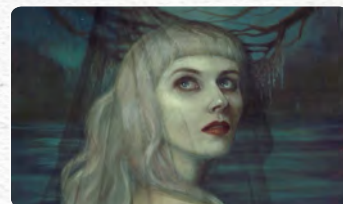
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The best traditional art revealed.



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How to draw back muscles.



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Laurie Lee Brom talks ghosts.

FXPosé Traditional

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

Christopher Hopkins

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.chrishopkinsart.com

EMAIL: chrishopkinsart@comcast.net

MEDIA: Oils



Christopher is an artist who's collaborated with some of the biggest names in film – George Lucas and Steven Spielberg, no less.

While he's worked extensively in the fantasy genre, the American specialises in portraiture and historic narrative paintings. His art has appeared on the pages of Spectrum Fantastic Art and the walls of the Museum of American Illustration. His show Red Tails, Silver Wings: Paintings of the Tuskegee Airmen is currently touring museums throughout the US.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I can't get over the depth that Christopher has depicted in his images. The crinkles, creases and feeling of weight that he's layered into the white dress on Hervor The Shield Maiden is expertly done."

Claire Howlett,
Editor

1 HERVOR THE SHIELD MAIDEN

Oil on canvas, 27x39in

"A maid from Danish history who held fast defending her hearth and home."

2 THE HORN OF VERDANDI

Oil on canvas, 38x55in

"Nordic legend has it that the beauty of the present is presented in the mead of now."





Jakub Rebelka

LOCATION: Poland

WEB: shzrebelka.tumblr.com

EMAIL: www.shz.artstation.com

MEDIA: Ink, pencil, crayon, acrylic, watercolours



Gdansk-based Jakub created stills for cutscenes featured in the video games *Shadow Warrior* and *the Witcher 2: Assassin of Kings*, and has worked for two of Poland's biggest games developers: CD Projekt RED and Flying Wild Hog.

The concept artist is also a skilled illustrator and uses a mixture of materials to create his distinctive style. "When I work in traditional mediums," he says, "it's usually with acrylic paint, watercolours, markers and crayons." Jakub is author of the comics *Doktor Bryan* and *Ester Klemens*, and has released his own art book, titled *Element Chaosu*.



1 RIGEL

Pencil, ink, acrylic, watercolours on cardboard, 11.7x16.5in

"A tech-organic hybrid warrior wears mechanical armour that supports his life functions."

2 MERCURY

Crayons, markers, watercolours, acrylics, 11.7 x 16.5in

"This space monarch is a member of the elite classes. I combined organic and mechanical elements with the era of Louis XIV of France to create this ruler's exotic, alien look."

3 MEDUZA

Acrylics, ink, watercolours on paper, 11.8x15.7in

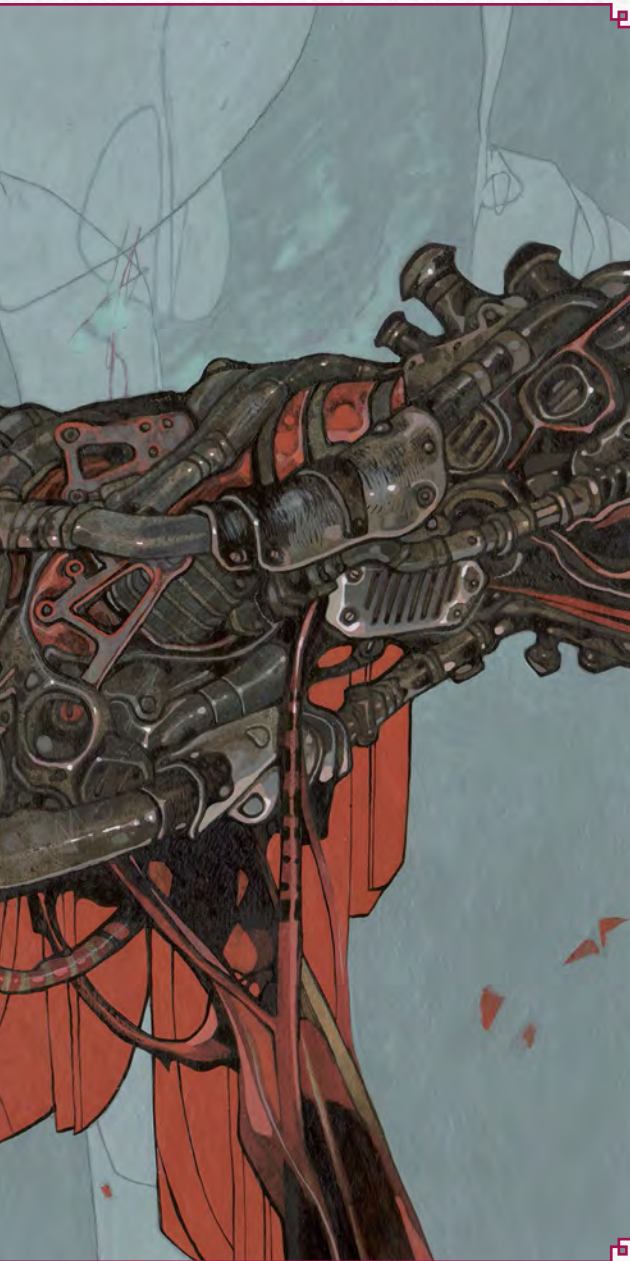
"A group of strange characters and creatures. I like to think of this illustration as a part of a bigger story – an alternative, parallel world."

4 SALAMANDRA

Crayons, markers, watercolours, acrylics on cardboard, 11.7x16.5in

"The witch and her lizard sit in the garden of poisonous plants, among the ruins of an ancient, forgotten cult."





IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Jakub's art caused quite a debate among the ImagineFX team. The Pole's work is quite unlike anything I've seen before. Witches, warriors, lizards – weird lines and wonderful colours."

Gary Evans,
Staff Writer

Matthew Stewart

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.matthew-stewart.com

EMAIL: matt@matthew-stewart.com

MEDIA: Oils



"I try to depict imaginative and fantastic subjects," Matthew says, "with a classical realist approach."

His art always begins with a sketch, but not before an intensive stage of life studies and reference gathering.

Matthew is a graduate of the Parsons School of Design, and over the past decade he's worked with Tor Books, Fantasy Flight Games and Blizzard Entertainment, and also sells pieces to private collectors. The illustrator lives and works in Runnemede, New Jersey, with wife Gina, who's also an artist.

1 CHASE

Oil on panel, 28x44in

"Visiting the beautiful Skelleg islands, off the coast of Ireland, inspired the landscape in this painting."

2 THE VOICE OF ISENGARD

Oil on panel, 20x40in

"This is the wizard Saruman and the toady Grima Wormtongue standing before the vale of Isengard. This was done for the cover to an expansion set for the Lord of the Rings LCG, published by Fantasy Flight Games."

3 FORTY-TWO

Oil on panel, 18x24

"My portrait of Gimli from Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings. It takes place right after the battle of Helm's Deep, and the title refers to the number of orcs that he's killed."

4 MARCHESA, THE BLACK ROSE

Oil on paper mounted to hardboard, 12x16in

"I loved painting all the Renaissance-inspired costume details as well as her mischievous smirk. That's me posing as the dude who's face down in his soup."





IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I love how Matthew has captured Gimli's character with the facial expression and hand positioning. You can definitely see he's had a work-out killing orcs. And the use of subtle lighting is just great."

Daniel Vincent,
Art Editor



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Creative Space



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SCRATCH ART SPACE: SYDNEY

Turn up and draw: founder **CARMEL BYRNE** on how artists and life models connect to generate creative energy in the Sydney suburbs

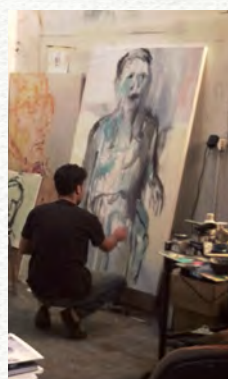
Scratch Art Space started life in the Sydney suburbs, within spartan artist studios set on an industrial estate. That was back in 2002. Founder and creative director Carmel Byrne has since expanded Scratch to incorporate an upstairs venue, street-front gallery and a fortnightly life-drawing group, Drawn Together.

The group is only a few months old, but the number of attendees has more than tripled in that time. With the right mix of music and models – and a drink or two – Carmel creates a “relaxed but focused environment.” The Australian even

provides free materials, so anyone can turn up and draw.

“Drawing is the most direct visual medium to an artist’s thinking. That’s really stimulating. Drawing is instantaneous. When you make a drawing with the mind – giving all your attention to the model – it’s very authentic. This mutual respect between model and artists creates a synergy that transcends into creative energy.”

While a number of pro fine artists attend, Drawn Together is also proving popular with animators and illustrators. Those working digitally during the day, Carmel says, find it helpful to spend an



An artist at work in the Scratch Art Space, which is home to Drawn Together.

evening sketching life models in a real, three-dimensional environment.

Scratch Art Space is always looking to expand, adding new classes in life drawing, sculpting and beyond: “We’re slowly bringing together the right people, and next year plan to add more workshops and art courses that focus on mindfulness and how drawing can provide the experience of being entirely in the moment, and the benefits of that experience in relation to other aspects of our lives, such as health and wellbeing.”

For more information on Scratch Art Space visit www.scratchartspace.com. You can see Carmel’s work at www.carmelbyrne.com.

Creative Space Scratch Art Space: Sydney

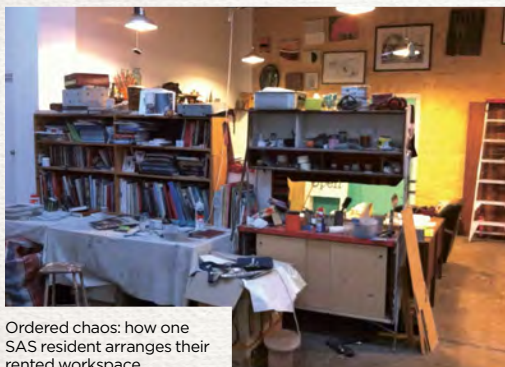


Scratch Art Space's street-front gallery is just one aspect of a creative environment that also boasts studio space for artists and a venue for live performances.

Artists can rent a studio within Scratch Art Space, adding to the community feel that's central to the venue's continued success.



SAS's clay modelling instructor Clara Hali, with model Benedicta Rockson.



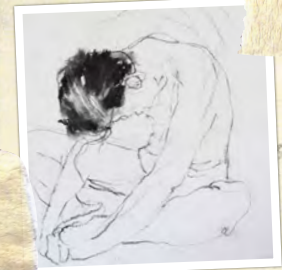
Ordered chaos: how one SAS resident arranges their rented workspace.



Founder Carmel says SAS strives to connect directly to the local community.

ART DOWN UNDER

Drawn Together attendees show off their sketches and paintings



Scratch Art Space founder Carmel Byrne shows how it's done.

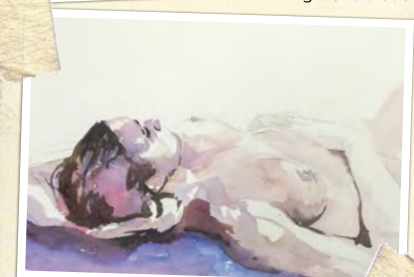
Alicia Roque adds some colour to her life drawing.



Another by Aussie artist and SAS leader Carmel Byrne.



Martin Klapka shows a flair for light and shade.



Multi-disciplined artist Manny Banados connects with the life model.

Workshops



**GET YOUR
RESOURCES**
See page 6 now!

Acrylics

ILLUSTRATE A BEAST-LIKE ELF

Taking elements from a lion and a deer, **JESPER EJSING** paints an elf with a difference, high up on the city rooftops...

An illustration is like a good movie scene, and the artist must be like the director. To create the scene, you must cast the role, build the set, place the lights, write the story and direct the actors.

For me it's not just a case of drawing and painting, but more about making decisions. A film-director friend of mine once told me that, "During the process of making a movie you're asked around 10,000 questions. The more of them you answer correctly, the better the film will be." My friend's way of thinking has stuck with me, and it's an approach that's applicable to illustration. Every stroke is a question. The more precise and efficient you become at painting, the fewer strokes (or answers) you need to capture the essence of your subject.

This specific illustration is for Magic: The Gathering. It will show a city elf perched on a rooftop overseeing the daily life far below him. Because this is going to be more of a mood piece than one of



action, I know I'm going to treat it almost like a portrait assignment. I also want to avoid the usual elvish appearance, and make the character look attractive but in his own way, with cat-like or other animal-inspired features, rather than resembling a slim human with pointy ears. I develop and adapt this idea as the painting progress. Let's get going!



Jesper was bitten by the fantasy bug when he discovered the works of Tolkien and D&D. He curtailed his art studies at university to become a full-time freelancer, and has also found the time to write several fiction books. www.jesperejsing.dk



© 2014 Wizards of the Coasts



1 Produce thumbnails

My art always starts as thumbnails, and it's the most important and time-consuming stage. Through them I can explore different storylines, gestures and ideas... and all for a guy on a roof! I quickly explore the mood of the scene, focusing on silhouettes and direction lines rather than faces or details. I chose the one that's zoomed in on the figure, because the finished image will reveal more of his face.



2 Start sketching

I enlarge my thumbnail and work on his body language. The angle of the face is tilted slightly forward so it's not seen from beneath. I want him to be looking down on the viewer. The looseness of the hand indicates that he's comfortable up on the rooftops. He looks almost regal, but something's wrong: he's too relaxed. When I replicate the pose I notice my weight has a pronounced forward bias, so I correct my sketch accordingly. ➡



TOOL
TIP

MASKING TECHNIQUE

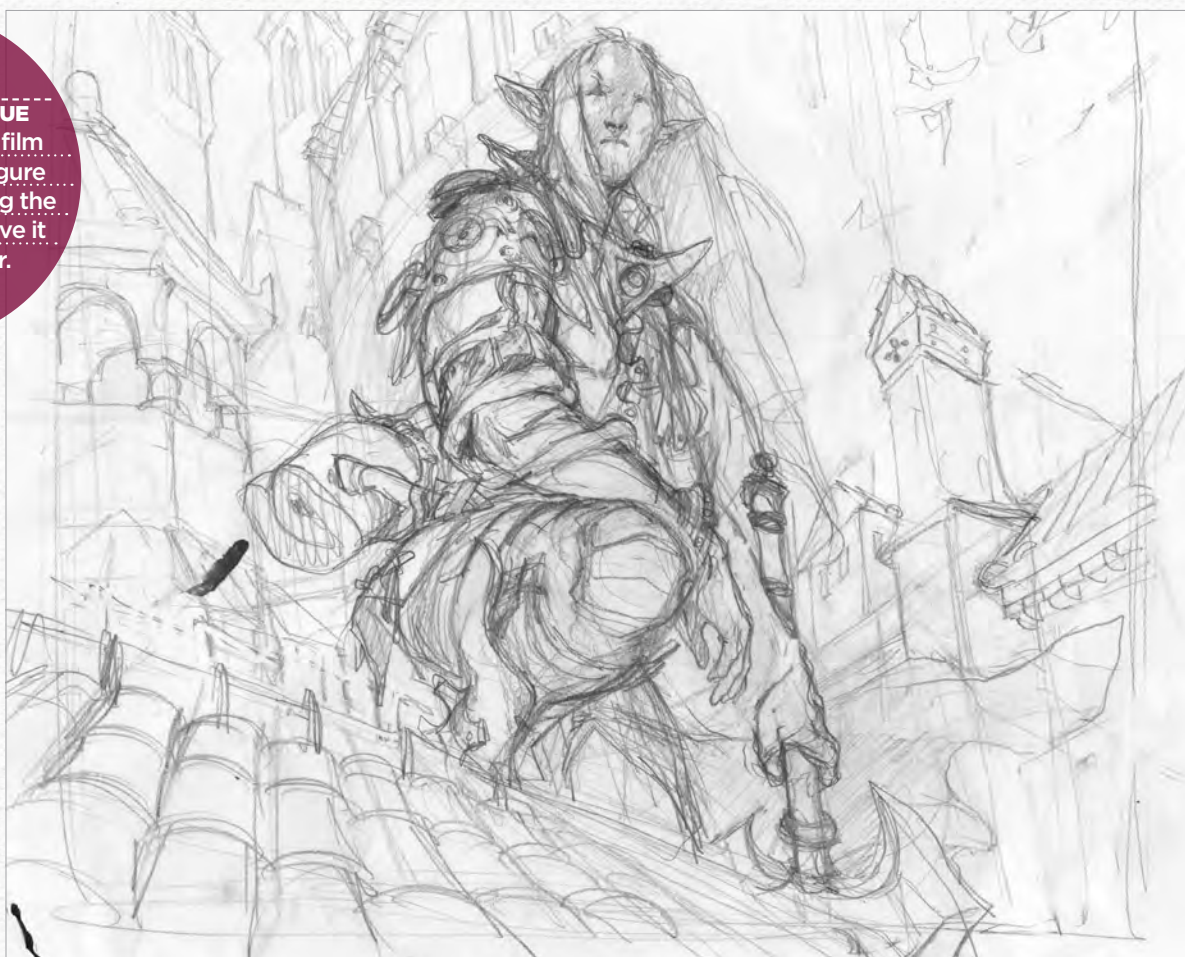
Use airbrush frisket film to cover the main figure while loosely painting the background. Remove it using a hair dryer.

ARTIST INSIGHT

DANCE WITH YOUR BRUSHES

I try to be messy and clumsy when blocking in the first layers of paint. When I let my eye glide out of focus and let the brush 'dance' by itself, it creates texture and shapes that look random and alive.

When I start refining light I use some of these happy mistakes for wrinkles or dents or holes, by painting light and shadows in the shapes that I've created randomly. Switching your 'shape-eye' on and off creates the look of care-free life in your art.



3 Transfer the sketch

I paint on a watercolour board. My only way of transferring my image is by rubbing the back of the paper with pencil and then drawing on top of the sketch. This technique imprints the sketch on to the board. Unfortunately, it's an imprecise method and so I only bother

transferring the most important lines. I then go over the whole drawing again, tightening everything up and drawing in a lot of the details. I draw the background freehand, ensuring that it doesn't take attention away from the figure. This is a common requirement for card art.



4 Inking the scene

I know that after the first wash or two of paint my pencil lines will disappear, so I ink my drawing in waterproof inks. Next, I differentiate my dark and light areas. I want the figure to stand out, so he'll be the darkest object, as will the rooftop because it's the closest object to the viewer. I divide the rest of the scene into grey tones. I tend to make it darker than needed because I know it'll be covered by a transparent layer that will soften the contrast. The values act as more of a guideline, rather than being used.



5 Colour rough

I make a copy of my inked black and white version and work up the colours roughly. It's going to be a sunlit cityscape, so I chose a warm palette. I use bright red on the roof tiles and his clothes to attract the viewer's eye. For temperature contrast I place greyish blue in the background. Small amounts of purple and blue add depth.



6 Painting process

I add a wash of raw umber and start painting the background with a broad flat brush, keeping my strokes simple to give a feeling of atmospheric depth. I work from the background to the foreground, creating overlapping elements that further enhance the depth in the scene.



7 Depicting the figure

I block in the colours with a transparent hue. I choose the value that will be the darkest colour of the element I'm painting, so that it blends with the grey tone beneath: it creates the darkest value for that part. The blocking-in colours also indicate the final appearance of the elf. I add rim light and dot his forehead with reflected light from the sky.



8 Colour strategy

I try to add light and colour to the shadow areas. The underside of his leg is lit up by the bounce light from the roof. The metal rings in his armour reflect the sky and the leather elements. I look for colours that are close to or next to the element I'm painting. I often add a lot of reflected light when painting a figure in strong sunlight.



TOOL TIP

MIRROR MIRROR

I keep a mirror handy when I need reference for hands, facial expressions or light, and for flipping the canvas to check for errors.



MATERIALS

PAINTS

■ Liquitex and Golden acrylic paints

SURFACE

■ Canson watercolour paper

BRUSHES AND OTHER TOOLS

■ Disposable artificial hair brushes (one-inch, and a 12, 4 and 2 brush)
■ Airbrush (for spraying water to prevent the acrylics from drying out on the paper)
■ Tombrow Mono 100 pencils

ARTIST INSIGHT

IT'S ALL IN THE MIND

Consider how little your materials or artistic techniques contribute to the finished image. The physical movement of your hand with a pencil on the paper isn't an especially difficult movement. It's what's in the mind that matters. Your ideas, the story, your painting, the design you create... it's all your personal work. Quality equipment just make the ideas unfold slightly easier.



9 Refining the figure

I maintain a clear silhouette as much as possible. I paint dark hair strands against the light background, and ensure the light on his bedroll is almost white to set it apart from the darker background colour. I darken the area around his weapon hand and left side to make it an "easy" area, where the eye can rest after noticing focal points such as the face, shoulders and elbow. Finally, I paint some birds taking off, to create that snap-shot feeling. Birds or blowing leaves are great for this! ●

Charcoal

DRAW UPPER BACK MUSCLES

The structure is simple, but the anatomy is complex. **CHRIS LEGASPI** has a systematic approach to drawing realistic upper back muscles

To me, the upper back is both a beautiful and interesting subject to draw. The structures are simple, but the anatomy is quite complex, because the muscles are arranged in multiple layers. So to help me draw upper back muscles accurately, I've come up with a layering system for their construction.

Because of the layering, the muscles will often look distorted and unrecognisable. To make sense of the anatomy, first I look for the major

landmarks, the clues to what the back is doing. Next up, I visualise the major bones, and this guides me in constructing the muscles. The first layer of muscles are the "deep" muscles and next I focus on them. Then I move on to the second layer of muscles – the superficial or surface muscles – which are more easily seen. Finally, I refine my drawing by adding smaller muscle shapes and other anatomical details.

I'll continue to refine the muscle shapes and shadow shapes until I reach

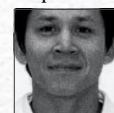
MATERIALS

■ Newsprint paper
■ Charcoal pencil or sticks



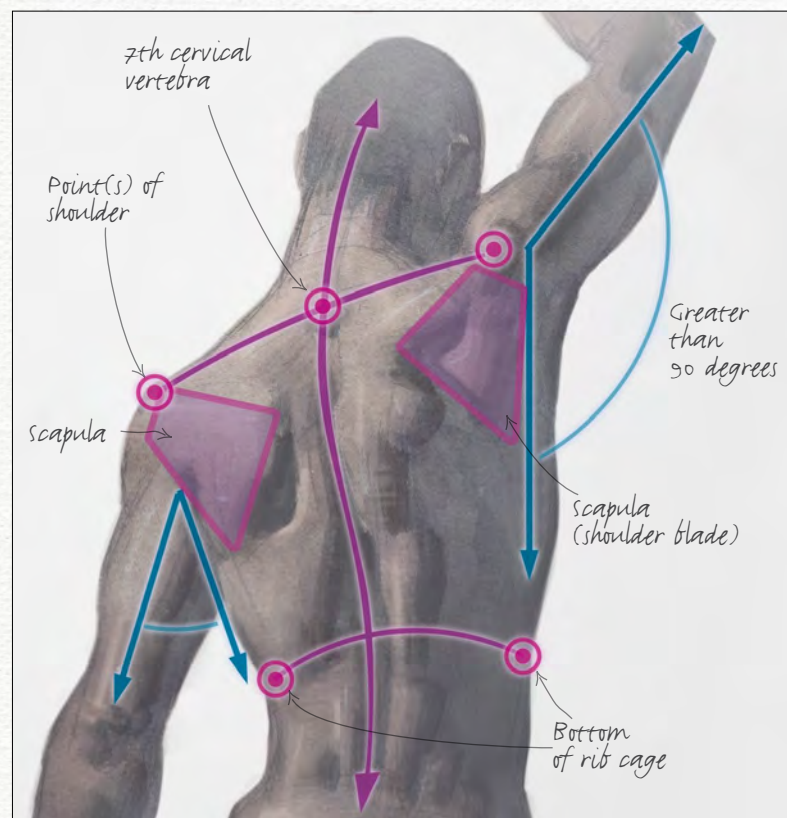
what looks like a good balance of detail with the more generic anatomical shapes.

One of the tools I often use to refine the drawing, and certainly here, is shadow shapes. I'll also use a combination of soft and hard edges to help model and round the muscles off.



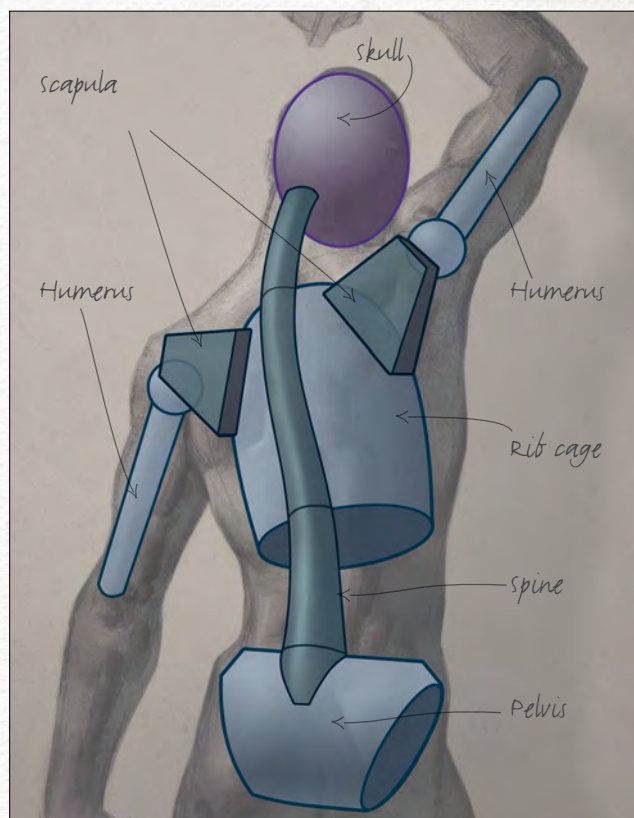
Chris is a video game concept artist who says he's obsessed with figure drawing and painting. He also loves sharing

great information on art and picture making.
www.freshdesigner.com



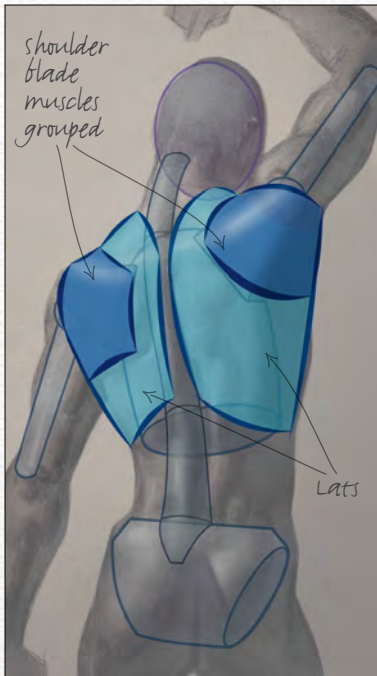
1 Observing landmarks

Before starting my drawing, I look for key anatomical landmarks, which let me know what muscles are contracting and interacting. I look for the scapula (the shoulder blade), points of the shoulder and the seventh cervical vertebra. I also note the angle of the arms to help me visualise the scapula.



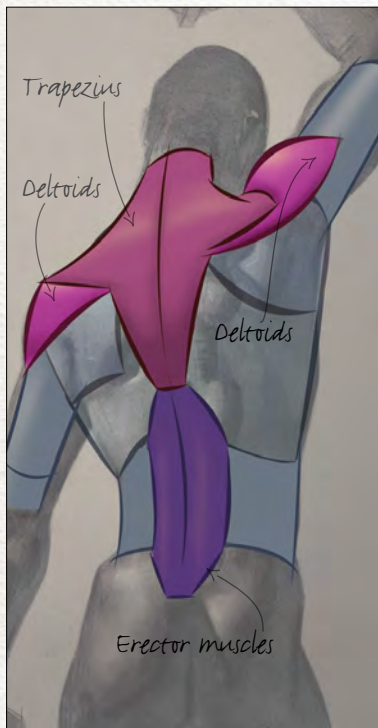
2 Know the bones

The major bones in the upper back are the rib cage, spine, scapula and humerus. Since many of these bones are hidden, I've trained my eye to visualise them under the skin. Once I visualise the bones, I can more easily begin to construct the muscle layers.



3 Deep muscles

The first layer is known as deep muscles, which are mostly invisible. The muscles I group here are the latissimus and those surrounding the scapula. To construct this layer, I group the muscles into simplified, geometric, cone-like shapes.



4 Surface muscles

The second layer of muscles are more easily seen under the skin. The major active muscles are the trapezius, deltoids and the erector muscles in the lower back. Since these muscles are visible, I try to match the shape of the ones I see.

5 Refinement

To complete the drawing, I'll refine the construction and also add the smaller muscle shapes and details. I prefer to add details in contracted areas such as the shoulder blade. To create form and a more realistic look, I'll use the light and shadow pattern to further define the muscles.

Use shadow shapes to refine anatomy

Finally, refine small shapes and details

DRAW LIFE LESSONS

Draw a back study of a muscular male from life or photo. Use the techniques to simplify, construct and refine the anatomy.

ARTIST INSIGHT TRUST YOURSELF

Use your mind's eye and practise visualising the layers of anatomy. In time your drawings will look more accurate.

First Impressions

✧ Laurie Lee Brom ✧

Laurie Lee's love of ghosts and the darker arts was set from an early age



You're a child, you see a painting or drawing that changes everything... where are you and what are you looking at?

I used to visit the Gibbs Museum of Art in Charleston, South Carolina. It has a room of miniature portraits from the 1600s through to the 1800s, and I would make up stories about the people in them. I think that set me on the road to imaginative realism. That, and my mother being a painter, too.

Where did you grow up and did it affect your chosen career in painting?

I grew up on James Island, South Carolina. It had a huge affect on me. It's an incredibly atmospheric place that's full of Spanish moss dripping from trees, cemeteries, critters and so many ghost stories! I hated the heat though, and spent most of summers indoors drawing and listening to music. At the time I didn't realise it, but it has everything to do with who I am and the art I make.

What other interests vied for your attention as you grew up?

Art, music, and when I was young I read a lot and was fairly obsessed with reincarnation and ghostly phenomenon.

What was your first paid job, and what do you think about it now?

It was for Little Golden Books. I did several workbooks for them. They stayed in print a long time. Shortly after completing them I had my second baby and gave up art for about 12 years!

What's the last piece you finished?

It's for a show called Boxes of Death! It's a group show, where artists paint on coffins, which tours the West Coast this fall. It's kind of different from Little Golden Books. I'm playing on the duality of the cat. Lover and killer. His death is celebrated by the little critters and he's mourned by his owner.



SWAMP BRIDE

Oil on canvas. Laurie's love of the spectral is clear in her art and a strong influence from her upbringing in Charleston, South Carolina, US.

What, outside of art, has most influenced your work?

Nature and ghosts, and when I say ghosts I mean that literally (think Wuthering Heights). Plus history and music – from the 30s to Chelsea Wolfe.

Next month

Petar Meseldzija

Can you name one person who helped you on your way?

So many people have helped and inspired me – I couldn't name just one!

“Nature and ghosts have influenced my work, and with ghosts I mean that literally”



SAVANNAH

Laurie painting Savannah, one of a series of nocturnal scenes featuring ladies and magnolias, for a solo show last year.

This is an incredibly giving artistic community. My husband has been so helpful with advice and as someone to share my passion for art with. My two closest artist friends, Lisa Petrucci and Isabel Samaras, were pivotal in giving me the guts to put my art out there.

And someone who got in your way?

No one but me! My creative brain was frozen solid – it locked up while my kids were young. It wasn't until they reached middle school that my muse reappeared and I had a voice of my own in my head again. I really admire women who can continue their creative endeavours while their kids are young, but I couldn't.

Do you have any painting rituals?

Not rituals, but I like to surround myself with things that have history. Almost everything in my studio is vintage and most things I collect tend to have a face on them. I find myself making up the history of the dolls I have. I think that comes out in my art.

Is your art evolving? What's the most recent experiment you've made?

Certainly. I'd be so bored if I painted the same thing the same way all the time. I guess the coffin cat was the most recent experiment. I had a solo show last year and painted lots of nocturnal scenes with magnolias and ladies (see below).

What's the most important thing you've learnt from someone else?

Draw all the time. And when you're not drawing, observe. I learned a ton through observation the years I wasn't painting. And never miss a deadline.

What's the most important thing you've taught someone else?

I hope I've taught my kids to listen to their gut and trust themselves. And not be afraid to put ideas and work out to the world, without recoiling if someone doesn't like it. Someone's going to hate it and you have to be fine with that.

What advice would you give to your younger self to aid you on the way?

Have more faith in yourself!

Laurie was inspired by local ghost stories and Gullah culture from a young age. Today her art covers fairy folk art and dark fantasy.

www.laurieleebrom.com

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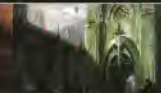
INTERVIEWS

SCAPLE © Walt Disney Animation

Foundation
DESIGN PROGRAM

Environment
DESIGN PROGRAM

Character
DESIGN PROGRAM



2 D . C G M A S T E R A C A D E M Y . C O M